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LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

JUNE 1899.

*Parson Kelly.*¹

BY A. E. W. MASON AND ANDREW LANG.

CHAPTER XIV.

OF THE GREAT CONFUSION PRODUCED BY A BALLAD AND
A DRUNKEN CROW.

FROM this time until Saturday, May 19, the world seemed to go very well for those concerned in the Bishop of Rochester's plot, which was a waiting plot; and in the other scheme, which was a hurrying scheme, and not at all known to the good Bishop. There was a comforting air of discontent abroad; the losses from the South Sea made minds heavy and purses light. Mr. Walpole had smoked nothing of what was forward, so far as a man could see; Mr. Wogan from Paris travelled to Havre-de-Grâce, whence James Roche, an Irishman, settled in that port, and a noted smuggler upon the English coast, set him across the Channel, and put him ashore at the Three Sheds and Torbay near Elephant Stairs in Rotherhithe. Mr. Wogan took his old name of Hilton, and went about his business, paying a visit now and again to the Cocoa Tree, where amongst other gossip he heard that Lady Oxford was still on the worst of friendly terms with Lady Mary Wortley Montague, and the best of loving terms with Colonel Montague. There was more than one jest aimed at Mr. Kelly on this last account, since a man who has been fooled by a woman is ever

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a fair mark for ridicule; and when James Talbot began to talk of the Parson with a mock pity, Wogan could no longer endure it.

'Sure your compassion is all pure waste, Crow,' said he. 'I could tell you a very pretty tale about the Parson were I so minded.'

Of course he *was* minded, and he told the story of the Parson's betrothal with a good many embellishments. He drew so tender a picture of Rose, that he became near to weeping over it himself; he clothed her in high qualities as in a shining garment, and you may be sure he did not spare Lady Oxford in the comparison. On the contrary, he came very near to hinting that it was the Parson jilted Lady Oxford, who therefore fell back upon Colonel Montague to cover her discomfiture. At all events that was the story which soon got about, and Mr. Wogan never said a word to correct it, and in due time, of course, and in a way not very agreeable, it came to her ladyship's ears.

The Parson arrived in London on a Wednesday, the 13th of April. The weather had been terrible on the sea, and the unhappy dog Harlequin had contrived to slip his leg by a fall on deck. However, he soon recovered of his injury, thanks to the care of Mrs. Barnes, and Mr. Kelly carried him to the Bishop's house at Bromley, where his lady lay a-dying. There, too, as he had good cause afterwards to remember, he wrote certain letters for the Bishop, to the King, the Duke of Mar, and General Dillon, and put them in the common post. They did but carry common news, and excuses for delay. The Bishop's lady died on the 26th of April, and on that very day Harlequin's hurt broke out again, and the poor creature went whining lugubriously about the gloomy house, as though it was mourning for its mistress. This fact should be mentioned, because the Duke of Mar had made an inquiry in a letter as to how Harlequin fared, and whether *Mr. Illington*, as the Bishop was called, had as yet received the dog. Kelly replied that '*Illington* is in great tribulation for poor Harlequin, who is in a bad way, having slipped his leg again,' which was true, for since the dog by his tricks greatly lightened his lady's sickness, the Bishop grew very fond of him, though at the Bishop's trial, when these things were brought up to prove that Illington and he were the same man, it was said 'he never loved a dog.' So much for Mr. Kelly.

Rose and her father reached London a fortnight or more after the Parson. Wogan had no knowledge of her arrival, for since he

had left Avignon he had not so much as clapped his eyes upon the Parson, who, what with the Bishop's grief for his wife, and what with the Bishop's gout, was much occupied at Bromley. It was not until that calamitous day, the 19th of May, that the two friends met again. Events moved very quickly upon that same day. It seemed they had been hatching this long while out of sight, like thunderclouds gathering on a clear day under the rim of the sea. Seven breathless hours saw the beginning and the end. For it was not until six o'clock of the afternoon that Mr. Wogan chanced upon the ballad, that was our ruin, and by three of the morning all was over.

This ballad would have come to Wogan's knowledge, or to that of Kelly, earlier, and would have been to them the petrel that heralds the storm (not that Wogan ever saw this poetical fowl), but for a simple cause. Mr. Wogan was obliged to be much out of the town in these days, having a hundred errands to the country gentlemen of the honest party. Kelly, on his side, was purely hacked with constant travel, riding commonly by night, and sleeping, when in London, by day. Of course, too, he was the last man to hear what was being said or sung about himself and the affection which had lately occupied his heart.

Now, on the 19th of May, in the morning, Mr. Wogan found himself far enough from London, at the seat of Sir Harry Goring, a gentleman of Sussex, and a very loud friend of the Cause. Every man had then his own scheme, which he thought the best in the world, and Sir Harry's was to make use of the Sussex smugglers, to arm their boats even better than they were armed already, and to head a band of them in the Rising. Wogan was sent to Goring's place because he knew the sea, and how to deal with sea-faring men. But he had not come to share the highflying hopes of Sir Harry. To Wogan it seemed that the smugglers were making their own market out of the whimsies of the country gentlemen, who, being magistrates, winked hard at Free Trade in the hope of the alliance of the Free Traders, that cared very little for King James. 'James or George,' thought they, 'the Customs are still the Customs.' Mr. Wogan made friends, however, with some of these merchants, who might prove useful on occasion.

It was on the morning of May 19, then, that Sir Harry drove Mr. Wogan back to town, in very great state and splendour. Sir Harry was a big and noisy gentleman, and no love was lost between him and the Bishop of Rochester.

He collared me, sir, once,' Sir Harry said. 'He laid hands

on a gentleman of loyal and ancient line, in his own house, the damned, black-visaged parson. Damned I may say, for he does not value swearing, but curses in his tantrums like a sea-captain on his own quarter-deck.'

The Bishop, for his part, had said in Kelly's hearing: 'Lord deliver me from a scheme that has Sir Harry Goring in it.'

The baronet was yet fuming against the Bishop as he drew up before Burton's coffee house, at an hour when the streets had lost the high sun of the day. Mr. Wogan alighted, thinking to seek his letters at Burton's, and the baronet's carriage rolled off to his town house. Wogan entered the coffee-house; the great room was extraordinary full, and there was an eager buzz of talkers, who dropped their voices, and looked oddly at Mr. Wogan as he passed through, and so upstairs to a little chamber kept private for himself and his friends.

As he went he heard roars of laughter, and a voice chanting in the deplorable, lamenting tone of the street ballad-singer. Mr. Wogan caught a name he knew in this ditty, and knocking hastily in the manner usual and arranged, was admitted. The room was thick with tobacco smoke, and half-a-dozen empty bottles made mantraps on the floor. Through the Virginia haze Wogan saw a tall man, very black, swaying on his legs as he steadied himself by the table, and sang:—

Let Weapons yie'd them to the Gown,
The Latin Singers say :
Ye Squires and Ladies of renown,
The tune is changed to-day !
A Lady loved a Parson good,
And vowed she'd still be true.
Alas, the Sword goes o'er the Hood,
The Sword of Montague !

'What ribaldry have you got now?' said Wogan, but the Crow hastily embraced him in the French manner, holding the paper of the ballad over his shoulder, and still chanting.

'The little Parson is made immortal,' quoth he. 'Here is the newest ballad, all the story of his late amorous misfortune. Why do you look so glum?'

For Wogan had gently disengaged himself from Mr. Talbot's embrace, who exhaled a perfume of wine and strong waters.

'Crow, you fool, be quiet,' said Wogan; 'this is miching mallecho! Who wrote that rant?'

'We think it is Lady Mary Montague, from the Latin tags; it is headed *Cedat Armis Toga*.'

'More likely his Grace of Wharton, I smoke Sophia,' said Tyrrel, the only other man in the room. 'He has thrown in the Latin to put us on Lady Mary's scent, and make more love between her and Lady Oxford: it is his way.'

'And a very ill way too,' Mr. Wogan said. He saw reason to believe that Tyrrel was right, and that the ballad was his frolic Grace's. Neither opinion was right, as shall appear. But Lady Mary, then a friend or enemy of the Duke's, day about, got the credit of the mischievous nonsense, as was intended, and 'hence these tears,' as the Parson said.

Mr. Wogan had snatched the ballad into his hands by this time, where he intended to keep it.

'Gentlemen,' he asked, 'are you entirely sober?'

'Does my speech betray me?' said Tyrrel, who, to do him justice, was wholly in his right mind.

'That is no answer; but, if it were, and if you don't care for a lady's name——'

'She jilted the Parson!' cried the Crow.

'Have you no thought of the reputation of—Mr. Farmer?'

'Mr. Farmer?' exclaimed Tyrrel. Mr. Farmer was the cant name for the Chevalier, and Tyrrel scratched his head, wondering what on earth the Chevalier had to do in the same galley with the Parson's love affairs.

'Mr. Farmer!' replied the Crow, blinking his eyes reproachfully. 'Indeed, it is yourself has been drinking, Nick. What has the ballad or poor George's misfortune to do with Mr. Farmer, a gentleman of unbleb—upblem—I repeat, sir,' said the Crow with solemnity, 'a gentleman of unblemished reputation?'

'Mark how a long word trips you up, and the evening so young!'

'Mr. Farmer's health! I buzz the bottle!' cried the Crow, putting out his hand to the bottle, that was nearly empty.

Mr. Wogan stopped his hand.

'I tell you, Crow, the Affair hangs on your nonsense. We may all hang for it,' he said in a certain tone of voice, which made Tyrrel open his mouth.

Wogan read through the ballad, which was full of insults enough to drive any woman mad, let alone Lady Oxford. He knew what a woman wild with anger can do, and blessed his stars that for so many months her ladyship had not met Kelly, and could know nothing of the inner plot. Still, she knew enough to

do a power of mischief. The ballad was written in a feigned hand, which Wogan did not know.

'James,' he said to Talbot, 'where did you get this thing? You are not haunting the fine ladies who pass these wares about? Where did you get it?' he said, shaking the Crow, who had fallen half asleep, as he spoke.

'Got it from my friend Mr. Pope,' answered the Crow drowsily.

'You got it from Mr. Pope! *You!* Where did you meet Mr. Pope?'

'At the Little Fox under the Hill, down by the water.'

This tavern was precisely the shyest meeting-place of the party, where the smugglers came to arrange crossings and receive letters.

'Mr. Alexander Pope at the Fox under the Hill! Crow, you are raving! What kind of man is your friend Mr. Pope?'

'Who's Mr. Pope? Don't know the gentleman. Hear he's poet.'

'The gentleman who gave you the ballad.'

'Didn't say Pope, said Scrutton,' answered the Crow. 'Very honest man, my friend Mr. Scrutton. Met him often. Exshlent judge of wine, Mr. Scrutton. Exshlent judge of plots. Mr. Scrutton applauded our scheme.'

'You told him about it? Crow, you should be shot!'

'I told him! You inshult me, sir. Very good plot, very good wine. Mr. Scrutton told *me* about plot. Often talked it over a bottle. I'm a most cautious man. I don't drink except with very honest men. Dangerous!' murmured the Crow.

'You are sure his name is Scrutton?'

'Quite certain. Said "Pope" because of poetry. Soshiation of ideas. Mr. Pope's poet. You'd know that, but you are drunk, Mr. Wogan.'

There was nothing more to be got out of the Crow. Invited to give a personal description of Mr. Scrutton, he fell back on his moral character as 'a very honest man.' He might be, or, again, he might be a spy. In any case, here was the ballad, and there was the furious woman ready for any revenge.

'Go home; go to bed! Tyrrel and I will walk with you to your rooms,' said Mr. Wogan, who, stepping to the letter-rack, picked up an epistle for Mr. Hilton. The handwriting of the superscription made him look so blank that the others noticed

his face and were silent. The letter was in Lady Oxford's hand. He put it in his pocket.

They led the Crow to his door in Germain Street. He behaved pretty well on the whole, only insisting that his fortune would be made if Wogan would but give him the ballad and let him sing it at the corner of St. James's.

'Affluence would be mine,' he said, and dropped a tear. 'Oh, Wilton—Hogan, I would say—'tis a golden opportunity!'

But if the opportunity was golden, Wogan was of iron, and they did not leave the debased Crow till he slept in the sheets, which on the night before it was probable that his limbs had never pressed.

When the Crow was slumbering like a babe, Mr. Wogan and Tyrrel stepped out, turning the key of his chamber on the outside and entrusting it to his landlady.

'Mr. Talbot has a fever,' Wogan told her, 'and will see nobody. He must on no account see anyone except Mr. Tyrrel, nor must he be disturbed before his physician calls.'

Accompanied by the gift of a crown, the key was pocketed by the woman of the house, who expressed anxiety for the health and repose of so quiet a gentleman as Mr. Talbot.

'And now, what is all this pother about?' Tyrrel asked when they were got into the street.

'Come towards the Park and I will instruct you. I need quiet for thought, and sylvan repose. What have you been doing all day?'

'Watching the Crow play the fool at Burton's.'

'You have no news?'

'I have seen nobody.'

They walked for a hundred yards or so in silence, Wogan frowning, and Tyrrel much perturbed with Wogan's perturbation.

'The new ballad is a true ballad,' said Wogan after a pause.

'Devil a doubt of it; but what then?'

'The greater the truth, the greater the libel.'

'*Et après?*'

'And the greater is the rage of the libelled. This ballad must have run through all the boudoirs before it reached the Crow.'

'And yet I do not smoke you. Where does this touch Mr. F——?'

'The lady that's libelled knew George very well.'

Tyrrel nodded his head.

'George knew everything,' continued Wogan.

Tyrrel stopped and caught Wogan by the elbow.

'Then, what George knew the lady knows?'

'Yes.'

'Maybe she's staunch.'

Wogan quoted Lady Mary.

'Politics are nothing more to her than pawns in the game of love.'

The two men stood looking at each other for a moment. The matter was too serious for them even to swear. Then they walked on again.

'Do you think?' asked Nick, 'she will be in the best of tempers when she hears she is sung about in coffee houses? Do you think she will blame anybody but Kelly for blabbing? She will give the ballad to Lady Mary Wortley Montague, and isn't Kelly of Lady Mary's friends? No, he did not blab, but never mind. She won't mind. And do you know that she is a kinswoman of the minister, Mr. Walpole? Let her say a word, and she *will* say it, and where is Mr. F——'s affair?'

'Where the Elector's hat and wig often are—in the fire,' answered Tyrrel, looking serious enough.

'That letter which I took up was from her; I know her hand. She is stirring.'

Wogan opened the scented letter as he walked. It was but to say that Lady Oxford had heard that Mr. Hilton was in town, and begged the favour of his company at her rout that night.

He told Tyrrel what there was to tell, both of them looking very unlike a May sunset as they walked under the trees. Since he left Brampton Bryan, Mr. Wogan had not been favoured with any compliments from Lady Oxford. Why did she begin her favours to-day?

'She is stirring,' he said again.

By this time they were got within the Park.

There much was stirring. Carts were streaming in and out with soldiers driving, soldiers lounging among the burdens of planks, tents, picks, and spades. Beside the Walnut Walk soldiers in their shirt sleeves were digging, trenching, measuring; a child could see what was toward—they were meting out a camp.

Mr. Wogan looked at Mr. Tyrrel, Mr. Tyrrel looked at Mr. Wogan.

'Faith, the lady *has* stirred!' said the former gentleman. 'Or Mr. Scrutton is not a very honest man,' said Mr. Tyrrel and whistled Lilliburlero,

The Walnut Walk was all astir and agape with evening loungers; it hummed with gossip. The two gentlemen went to the Cake House, sat down, and called for glasses of ratafia. Studying the face of Mr. Tyrrel, of which his own was no doubt the very likeness, Mr. Wogan inferred that they needed this refreshment.

They listened, with conscious grins of innocence, to the talk at the tables, being a little comforted to hear many questions, but no certain answers. The soldiers, it seems, being asked, could or would give no answer but that they had orders to make a camp. Fair ladies, smiling on private men, could get no other reply. It might be only for practice. It might be that the French were expected. Mr. Wogan heartily wished that they were, but nobody was expected, so far as he knew, save these same ragged regiments of his countrymen with the Duke. And, lo! a welcome was being got ready for them. As for the regiment that had been tampered with in the Tower, they were pitching tents in the Park. The two gentlemen, who had been conversing on faro and Newmarket, and laying each other fantastic odds, arose and walked eastwards.

'I think the air of the waterside would be wholesome,' remarked Mr. Tyrrel.

'I have to see a friend,' said Mr. Wogan, and they shook hands and parted.

'You will warn the Crow to be on the wing?' said Wogan over his shoulder, and the other nodded. Mr. Wogan could not but smile to think of the Crow winging an unsteady flight across the Channel. He managed to steer across, after all, thanks to Tyrrel. Then Wogan read Lady Oxford's *billet* again, and he walked to Bury Street.

He knocked and the door was opened by Mrs. Barnes.

'Mr. Johnson at home?'

'It would appear, Mr. Hilton, that I did not give satisfaction,' said Mrs. Barnes, whose aspect was of a severity.

'Give satisfaction?'

'Mr. Kelly has thought to better himself, and if he prefers bed-fellows such as shall be nameless, and the coals disappearing, and his letters pried into, and if he thinks that I ever mention my gentlemen's affairs . . . !'

Here Mrs. Barnes threw her apron over her head, but gulps of lamentation escaped aloud, though her emotion was veiled like that of the Greek gentleman in the picture.

Mr. Wogan was not unpractised in the art of consoling Mrs. Barnes. He led her within, she was slowly induced to unshroud her pleasing features, and, at last, revealed the strange circumstance that Kelly had left her rooms two days before without giving in any sound justifying plea for this treason. Mr. Wogan, who was well aware of Mrs. Barnes's curiosity and the fluency of her tongue, was in no doubt as to the cause which had brought the Parson to leave her, and thought the step in this posture of their affairs altogether prudent.

'But he will return,' he reassured her. 'What!—you know Mr. Johnson, he will never desert you.'

'So he said. He would come back in a month, and paid in advance to reserve the rooms, but it would seem that I do not give satisfaction. And here's all his letters to all manner of names. Look at them! Look at them! And how many of them are signed Ugus? Oh, I know what that will end in, and I'm just going to send the girl round with them—'

'I'll carry them myself, Mrs. Barnes,' said Wogan, interrupting her. He picked up the letters from the table, and glanced about the room, if by chance Mr. Kelly had left anything inconvenient behind him. But, except the letters, there was not so much as a scrap of paper about to show that ever he had lodged there. Wogan looked at the scrutoire on which the strong-box he had given to his friend at Paris was used to rest. It had held Lady Oxford's letters in the old days, but of late it had lain unused, and the dust had gathered thick upon the lid, so that in his haste the Parson might well have forgotten it. But he had carried it away, and with it his big Bible, which had stood beside it in such an incongruous juxtaposition.

'I'll carry them myself,' said Wogan, and putting the letters in his pocket he went down the steps. He marched some twenty yards down the street and then came to a stop. He looked round. Mrs. Barnes was watching him from the doorway with as grim a smile as her cheery face could compass.

'But, my dear woman, where will I carry them to?' asks Wogan, coming back.

'That's it,' cried she with a triumphant toss of her head. 'One minute Mrs. Barnes is a tattling, troublesome woman, and, if you please, we'll not take so much trouble as to say goodbye to her, and the next it's Mrs. Barnes that must help us, and tell us where we are to go. Mr. Johnson lodges at Mrs. Kilburne's.'

'Mrs. Kilburne's! Why, she's your bosom friend, Mrs. Barnes.'

Mr. Wogan was a trifle surprised that the Parson should leave Mrs. Barnes because of her curiosity and take a lodging with Mrs. Barnes's bosom friend, who, to tell the truth, was no less of a gossip.

'Well,' said Mrs. Barnes, flaring up. 'D'ye think I would let him go to those I know nothing of, who would rob him and starve him of his last crust of bread? No, for all that he scorns and despises me! No, he asked me where he should go, and I told him to Mrs. Kilburne.'

'Oh, he asked you,' said Wogan. 'Well, it is a very Irish proceeding. I'll go to Mrs. Kilburne's and find him.'

'You may go to Mrs. Kilburne,' said she as Wogan turned away, 'but as to finding him,' and she shrugged her shoulders.

'Why, what do you mean?'

'A man in that moppet's livery, for moppet she is, my Lady or not my Lady, brought a note yesterday, and he that had been hiding from her, like the honest man he used to be before she came trapesing after him.'

Wogan pulled the letters from his pocket and began looking them over.

'No,' said Mrs. Barnes, 'you have not got it. I sent the fellow on with the scented thing.'

A note from Lady Oxford to George, an heroic epistle from Ariadne to Theseus! Mr. Wogan thought it high time to see Theseus, and leaving Mrs. Barnes with a becoming blush on her features that laughed through their tears, he walked to Ryder Street.

Mr. Wogan knocked at the door in the deepening dusk. The landlady opened. She knew Wogan, who, indeed, had occupied her chambers at one time. She smiled all over her jolly face:

'Mr. Hilton! Taller than ever, and welcome as ever.'

'Thank you, Mrs. Kilburne, I shall soon rival the Monument, but I can still get under your lintel by stooping. Where is Mr. Johnson?'

'Mr. Johnson? Oh, sir, what a life that poor gentleman lives. Out all night, home in the morning with mud or dust on him to the shoulder, and so to bed all day.'

'Then Mr. Johnson must be wakened. I can do it, were he one of the seven sleepers. George!' cried Mr. Wogan, lifting up his voice.

'Oh, sir, be quiet! A very dainty gentleman has my first floor, and he will be complaining of the noise. You always were that noisy, Mr. Hilton!' She walked down the passage as she

spoke and threw open a door upon the right. 'Mr. Johnson, he has my ground floor, but you can't waken him, loud as you are, nor any man, so be quiet, Mr. Hilton.'

'Have I to weep for my poor friend's decease?' asked Wogan as he entered the room.

'No, sir, or I would not be laughing at your nonsense; you are *such* a gentleman.'

There was no doubt this was the Parson's lodging. For as Wogan stood just within the door, he saw by the window Mr. Kelly's *scrutoire*. It was the first thing indeed on which his eyes fell. He stepped across the room and threw open the lid. He saw a despatch-box, and from the lock he knew it to be that in which Kelly kept safe the papers of the Bishop's plot.

'So there's another lodger in the house,' said Nick. He took up the box and tried the lid. It was locked. But Mr. Wogan would have preferred that the Parson should have kept the papers in his own box, of which the lock was stouter. That box he saw further back in the *scrutoire*, half hidden in news-sheets. But that too he found to be locked, and shaking it in his hand, was aware that, like the other, it held papers. The lid of the box was covered with dust, as though it had not been touched for months. Lady Oxford's letters had been locked up there. No doubt they were there still. Mr. Wogan wondered for a little at the strange sentiment which makes a man keep such dead tokens of a dead passion. He put the box back amongst the news-sheets, and, turning to Mrs. Kilburne—

'But where is the man?' he cried. 'George!' and he rapped on the table with his cane.

'You can't waken Mr. Johnson,' said Mrs. Kilburne, 'because he awoke an hour ago, and dressed in a hurry, but braver than common, with his silver-hilted sword, Alençon ruffles, black coat and satin lining, silver shoulder knots, and best buckles, and out he goes. He was summoned by a man in the livery of my Lord the good Bishop of Rochester.'

'Will you tell him, when he returns, that Mr. Hilton waited on him, and greatly desires to see him in his best before he goes to bed?' Wogan pulled the letters from his pocket and laid them on the table which stood in the centre of the room.

'I will, sir; but, if you call again, pray, sir, be very quiet. My first-floor gentleman is such a dainty gentleman.'

'A mouse shall be noisy in comparison. I have a great tenderness, Mrs. Kilburne, for the nerves of fine gentlemen.'

Mrs. Kilburne grinned in a sceptical sort.

'But,' Wogan added suddenly, 'it is very like I shall fall in with Mr. Johnson before then.' He took some half-a-dozen of the letters again into his hand and looked them over. They were inscribed to such cant names as Illington, Hatfield, Johnson, Andrews, and were evidently dangerous merchandise. Mr. Wogan thought they would be safer in his pocket than on Mr. Kelly's table. He picked up the rest, but as he put them back into his pocket, one fell on to the floor. Wogan caught sight of the handwriting as it fell. Then it stared up at him from the floor. The letter was written in a woman's hand, which Mr. Wogan was well enough acquainted with, although it was in neither Lady Oxford's nor the hand of Rose. Wogan stooped down and picked it up. For a letter, it was extraordinary light. Wogan weighed it in his hand for a second, wondering what it might be. However, there was no answer to be got that way, and Mr. Wogan had weightier matter to engage his thoughts. He put it into his pocket and marched to his own lodgings, which were hard by in the same street.

Several problems, a swarm of skirmishing doubts, trooped through his mind.

'What did my Lady Oxford mean by writing to Kelly?'

To this Wogan answered that she meant the same thing by Kelly as by himself, and for some reason had bidden him to her rout. As to her motive for that act of unexpected hospitality, Wogan had his own thoughts, which he afterwards confided to his friend. 'But who,' he pondered, 'can answer for a woman's motives when the devil of perversity sits at her elbow?'

Next, why had Kelly made himself such a beau? It could not be merely to do honour to a mourning prelate who would never glance at his secretary's satin and point d'Alençon.

Mr. Wogan inferred that his first guess was right, that Lady Oxford had bidden Kelly to her rout, and that, by the token of his raiment, Mr. Kelly meant to accept the invitation.

Kelly knew nothing of the camp, and the discovery which it seemed to speak of, when he left the lodgings where he had slept all day. Of the ballad, too, it was like that Kelly knew nothing, and, in Wogan's opinion, the ballad was the cause of the military stir. Lady Oxford, inflamed with anger, blaming Lady Mary for the ballad, and blaming Kelly for blabbing her fault to her enemy, Lady Mary, had doubtless visited Mr. Walpole. The

innocent Kelly, innocent of all these things, would be going to Lady Oxford's to fathom the causes of her renewed friendship.

Mr. Wogan puzzled his brains over these matters while he supped in solitude at his lodgings. His friends have hinted that his mental furnishing is not in a concatenation with his bodily stature. He has answered that, if it were so, he would be Shakespeare and the Duke of Marlborough rolled into one. Though refreshed with Burgundy, his head felt weary enough when he turned to the question, 'What was he, Wogan, to do next?' In his opinion, the boldest plan is ever the best; moreover, he had a notion that there was no safer place in London for him, that night, and perhaps for Mr. Kelly, than Queen Square in Westminster, which Lady Oxford had taken for a permanence. He decided, therefore, first to go to the Dean's house, see Mr. Kelly, if he could, and unfold his parcel of black news. Next, he would take Kelly to Lady Oxford's, if Kelly would come, for Wogan not only deemed this step the safest of his dangers, but expected to enjoy a certain novelty of the emotions, in which he was not disappointed. He therefore, imitating the clerical example, began to decorate himself in his most seductive shoulder knots to do honour to Lady Oxford.

It may be that Wogan's mind, already crowded by a number of occurrences and dubitations, had exhausted its logical powers, for there was one idea which should have occurred to him earliest, and which only visited him while he was shaving. Who was the first person he was likely to encounter at Lady Oxford's? Why, the very last person whom at this juncture it was convenient for him to meet—namely, Colonel Montague. Wogan heartily wished he had left the Colonel between two fires at Preston barricade. But now there was no help for it, go he must. The Colonel, like other people, might not remember the boy in the man and under a new name, or, if he did—and then a fresh idea occurred to Wogan which made him smile.

'I was born,' he said, 'to be a lightning conductor!'

CHAPTER XV.

AT THE DEANERY OF WESTMINSTER.

WOGAN finished the work of adorning his person, and stepped into the street. The night was serene, with a full moon, the air still, the pavements were clean as the deck of his ketch. He

thought that he would walk to the Dean's, by way of St. James's Park, and, his rooms being close to Mr. Kelly's new lodgings, he passed through Ryder Street, and, when Mr. Wogan had almost arrived at that point, the door opened. A gentleman came forth ; the moonlight was full on his face. Mr. Wogan muffled his face in his cloak, and stepped stealthily back.

The gentleman was Colonel Montague. He bade the chairmen carry him to Queen Square ; Mr. Wogan heard the word of command with an inexpressible confusion of dismay. He had hardened his heart to encounter the man whose life, in a youthful indiscretion, he had saved at the risk of his own, but what was the Colonel doing in Kelly's lodgings ?

By this time the warrior and his chair had turned the corner, and Mr. Wogan abandoned himself to meditation. Up and down Ryder Street he paced, puzzling over the Colonel's visit to Kelly, whom, at all events, he could not have found at home. Was he carrying a cartel to his predecessor in Lady Oxford's heart ? In that case it was all the more necessary to meet him and play the part of Dr. Franklin's kite, which had not at that time been flown, but is now making talk enough for the learned. On this point Mr. Wogan's mind was constant. Should he question Mrs. Kilburne, he asked himself ? Mr. Wogan crossed the road. But the Colonel was little likely to have told her a word of his business. Mr. Wogan stopped.

There was another point ; for whatever reason the Colonel had called at George's lodgings, George must be told of the visit. Here was something which pressed, without question. Mr. Wogan marched towards the Dean's house in Westminster, where the Bishop of Rochester lay. He knew the road very well, being himself an old Westminster boy. It was but seven years since he had run away to join his brother Charles and raise the North for King James. He could not tell, at this moment, whether he had deserted his studies for King James's sake, or to escape that dull task of writing out my Lord Clarendon's weary history in a fair hand.

As he entered the precincts, Wogan felt much like a truant boy, and it was as if Time had stood still while *he* ran. Nothing was changed, except that the new dormitory, which Bishop Atterbury had just built, shone white among the black old stones. There were lights in the windows that suddenly went out : the lads were a-bed. Mr. Wogan knew two of them, Sir Harry Goring's boys ; one of them was another Harry, who but lately left

the service of the Prince and died in that of his Prussian Majesty. Wogan looked up at the blank windows, and thought of seven years a-gone, and of his life since then, an unprofitable contemplation, which his mind gladly deserted. He marched up under the arch, through the darkling cloister, and tapped, gently but firmly, at the Dean's door. He must see Mr. Kelly. As it chanced, and by the merest accident in the world, Wogan timed his taps thus: 1—2, 3, 4, 5, 6—7.

There were stealthy steps within, with a movement of yellow light, and then a voice that Mr. Wogan knew very well came through a judas.

'Is it my father's knock?'

'Is it your granny's knock, Sam?' asked Wogan through the judas. The voice was that of Sam Wesley, a young usher in Wogan's time, one whom he had always liked and tormented.

The steps moved away, and the light.

'Sam!' whispered Mr. Wogan, very loud for a whisper, through the judas. 'Sam, you remember me. Nick Wogan.'

The steps were silent.

'Sam, remember Lord Clarendon! Remember Nick, who kicked the bully for beating your little brother Jack.'

The steps shuffled back to the door.

'You have not the pass-word,' said the voice through the judas.

'Damn the pass-word,' whispered Wogan. 'I want George Kelly. I must see him in the name of the Blackbird. Hawks are abroad.'

'It is clean against all rules,' came the voice from within.

'Open, in the name of the cobbler's wax I once put on your chair, or I'll break the windows. You know me, Sam!'

Mr. Wesley knew Mr. Wogan. He undid the lock, Mr. Wogan smuggled himself within, and nearly choked Mr. Wesley in his embrace.

'It is a giant!' said Mr. Wesley, putting up his candle to Wogan's face. The wind blew on the light that flickered in the absolute darkness, all the house being hung with black for Mrs. Atterbury's death.

'A son of Anak, Sam, who would have battered down your old door in a minute.'

'I verily believe you would, Nick,' said Sam, leading the way up the black stairs to a den of his own, where he was within call of the Bishop. On tiptoe he marched, placing his finger on his lips.

When they were got among Sam's books and papers of the boys' exercises, the Usher said, 'It is a very extraordinary thing, purely a Providence.'

'I deserve one; the purity of my life deserves one,' said Mr. Wogan. 'But wherein do you see the marvel?'

'You did not know it, but you gave my father's knock,' said Sam in a voice of awe. 'It is Old Jeffrey's doing—directed, of course—directed.'

'Old Jeffrey? Is it a cant name for an honest man?'

'For a very honest spirit,' said the usher, and explained to Mr. Wogan that the particular knock and the passwords to follow (which Mr. Wogan did not know) were his own invention. His father's house at Epworth, in the year 1716, had been troubled, it seems, by an honest goblin that always thumped and routed with a particular malevolence when the Elector was prayed for as 'the King.' Old Mr. Wesley's pet knock, though, the sprite could not deliver. Mr. Wesley had a conceit that the goblin might be the ghost of some good fellow who died at Preston.

'He keeps his politics in the next world,' said Mr. Wogan.

'Wit might say much on that head, wisdom little,' whispered the usher, wagging his kind head. 'You have special business with Mr. Johnson?' he asked. 'He is with my Lord, hard by. The Bishop's voice was raised when Mr. Johnson entered. I caught angry words, but now for long they have been quiet.'

'Mr. Johnson has a way with him,' said Wogan, who had learned from Goring that the reverend Father in God was of a hasty temper. 'How doth his lordship?'

'Very badly. I never saw him in a less apostolic humour. I know not what ill news he has had from France, or elsewhere, but he has been much troubled about Mr. Johnson's dog, Harlequin. The poodle has been conveyed out of town as craftily as if he were the Chevalier, I know not why, and is now skulking in the country, I know not where.'

It was, indeed, Mr. Wesley's part to know nothing. He was the Bishop's man, and as honest as the day, but had no more enterprise than another usher.

Wogan, he has said, knew Harlequin, second of that name, and had seen him coddled by Mrs. Barnes. He was cudgelling his brains for Harlequin's part in the Great Affair, when a silver whistle sounded, thin and clear.

Mr. Wesley beckoned to Wogan to be still, crept out of the room, and returned on tiptoe with Kelly. The Parson's elegant

dress was a trifle disarranged ; his face and hands were somewhat stained and blackened as with smoke, but the careful man had tucked up his Alençon ruffles beneath his sleeves. On seeing Wogan, George opened his eyes, and his mouth, but spoke never a word. He carried a soft bundle wrapped in a tablecloth, and when the door was shut he handed this to Mr. Wesley.

‘You have the key of the Dean’s garden?’ he whispered.

‘Yes; but wherefore?’ answered Sam.

‘His lordship bids me ask you to have the kindness to bury the contents of this——’

‘I know not what is in the bundle,’ said Mr. Wesley, with an air of alarm.

‘And you need not be told,’ said George. ‘But can you let me and my friend Mr. Hilton——’

‘Mr. Hilton?’ gasped Sam, as Kelly put his hand out to Wogan.

‘I must present you to Mr. Hilton,’ George said, and Wogan bowed and grinned.

‘I was about to entreat you, Mr. Wesley, while you are playing the sexton, to permit me and Mr. Hilton the convenience of a few moments of privacy in your chamber.’

‘With all my heart,’ said the puzzled Sam, hospitably opening a cupboard in his bookcase, whence he lugged out glasses and a bottle of Florence. Then he put list shoes over his own, and stole forth on his errand like a clerical cat.

All this while Wogan had said not one word to Kelly, nor Kelly to Wogan.

Mr. Wogan had sat down to sample the bottle, and Kelly stared at him.

‘How did you make your way in here?’ he asked at length.

‘Old Jeffrey,’ said Wogan airily. ‘I drink Old Jeffrey’s health, wherever he is.’

‘I believe you are the devil himself. That pass-word is known to no mortal but Mr. Wesley and me. The Bishop does not know it. His servants never see me come or go—only Sam. Whence got you the word?’

Mr. Wogan very gently tapped 1—2, 3, 4, 5, 6—7 on the table.

‘I know many things,’ he said. ‘But, George, what do *you* know?’

‘I know you should be aboard, Nick, and down to the water-side you step from this house.’

'I am already promised,' said Mr. Wogan with an air of fashion. 'I sup with Lady Oxford.'

'You are mad.'

'Nay, *you* are mad. I know many things. When you were carried hither in your chair, you knew nothing. George, what did the Bishop tell you? Why was he wroth with you? In brief, George, what do you know?'

'The Bishop angry with me! Nick, you know too much. You are the devil.'

'I want to know a great deal more. Come, unpack, and then it is my turn. But first step into Mr. Wesley's bedchamber and wash these hands, which go very ill with silver shoulder-knots; and pour the blackened water out of window. Any man or messenger could see that you have been burning a mort of papers.'

Mr. Kelly hastily adopted Mr. Wogan's precautions. When he entered the room again the conspirator had vanished, the clerical beau remained.

'Now,' said Wogan, 'you are fit to carry out your worldly design of pleasure, and I shall not be ashamed to sup in your company at Lady Oxford's.'

'I have changed my mind; I shall not go. But, Nick, how did you know my mind? 'Twas the last of minds you expected to take me in.'

'I am the devil. Have you not guessed it yourself?' replied Mr. Wogan, who was enjoying himself hugely. Perhaps it was the Florence coming a-top of the Burgundy. He was quite easy about the discovery. 'But unpack,' he said. 'What befell you with the Bishop?'

'He received me oddly. The room was as dark as a wolf's mouth, with black bombazine. There was a low fire in a brazier, that shone red on his lordship's polished poll, for he wore no perruque. His eyes blazed, his teeth grinned white. I was put in mind of a fierce old black panther in the French King's gardens.'

'Remote from the apostolic,' said Mr. Wogan.

'So were his first words,' said Kelly.

"You Irish dog, come here!" quoth the Bishop.

'I offered a conjecture that, in the mournful light, his lordship did not precisely see whom he was addressing. On that the little old man sprang out at me, seized me by the collar, and then fell back on his couch with a groan that was a curse. I put a cordial that stood by him to his lips, and was about to

call Mr. Wesley, when he forbade me with his eyebrows, and cried :

"Answer me this question before we part for ever. Did you despatch my letters of April 20 to the King and the others?"

"My lord," I said, "my duty to you ended with that episcopal laying on of hands, and with that expression which you were pleased to use when I entered."

He groaned, and said :

"I apologise. I am mad with pain" (which was plainly true), "and grief, and treachery. I beg your pardon, Mr. Kelly, as a Christian and a sick old man."

"My lord, you honour me. I enclosed the letters, as you directed, in a packet addressed to Mr. Gordon, the banker in Boulogne, and I sent them by the common post, your lordship not having forbidden the ordinary course."

"Then, damn it, sir, you have ruined us!" said the sick old Christian. "Did I not bid you write to Dillon that nothing of importance should go by the post?"

"But your lordship did not seem to reckon these letters of importance, for you did not discharge me from sending them in the common course."

The Bishop groaned again more than once, and there was a whole Communion Service in the sounds. You know Harlequin, Wogan?"

Mr. Wogan nodded and wondered.

"'Tis Harlequin has ruined us," said Kelly; "Harlequin and the Duke of Mar."

"I am devilish glad to hear it," said Mr. Wogan.

"Glad to hear it!" exclaimed Kelly, rising from his chair. "You are told of the discovery of the Great Affair, and the probable ruin of the Cause, and the danger of your friends and yourself, and you are glad to hear it!"

"Faith, I am," replied Wogan easily, "for I knew of the discovery before you told me, but I put it down to a lady of your acquaintance."

The Parson very slowly sat himself down again on his chair.

"In Heaven's name, why?" he asked, with a certain suspense.

"Tell your tale first, then I'll tell mine. This is very excellent Florence."

"The tale is too long, but the short of it is this: The Bishop had by him a letter of Mar's, dated May 11, in which Mar, addressing the Bishop as Illington, denounced him as plainly to anyone who read the piece, as if he had used the Bishop's own

style and title. He condoled on Mrs. Illington's recent death, he referred to Mr. Illington's high place in the Church, and to his gout. The three circumstances combined left no doubt as to who Illington is. There was no need such a letter of pure compliment should be written at all, except for the purpose of being opened in the post, and fixing the Bishop as Illington. Then, Kelly went on, 'I remembered a letter of Mar to myself, of last week, in which he spoke of the dog Harlequin as Mrs. Illington's. If these letters were opened in the post, and the Bishop knows for certain that they were opened, a blind man could see that Rochester and Illington are the same man, and own the same dog. The beast saved my life, but he has lost the Cause,' said Kelly with a sigh. 'Mar has sold us. The Bishop knows it in a roundabout way, through Lady Mary Wortley Montague.'

'Ah!' interrupted Wogan, and as Kelly stopped, 'No, go on. Tell your tale out first.'

Mr. Kelly resumed: 'Churchill was in Paris last week, and had meetings with Mar. The Duchess of Mar, knowing nothing, told this in a letter to her sister Lady Mary, and from Lady Mary it came to the Bishop's ears through a friend of both; in fact, Mr. Pope. 'Tis known, besides, that Mar has a pension from the Elector. He is not the first Scot to sell his King for a groat. The case is judged. But in the brazier the Bishop and I burned the papers. Sam is interring their ashes in the garden.'

Mr. Wogan poured out another glass of Florence.

'Was there anything very pressing in these same letters of April 20, George? Was there anything to put fear on the Elector's Ministers? Did they say, for instance, that the blow was to be dealt, you and I know when?'

'Not a word of that,' replied Kelly, and his face lightened. On the other hand, Wogan's fell, which Kelly no doubt remarked, for he continued eagerly, 'D'ye see, there is a chance still, for the Cause, for us, if the blow be struck quickly. We must strike quickly. So may we retrieve Mar's treachery. The Bishop in his letter made excuses to the King for the delay of any blow. He is not in favour of—you know what, and in the letters he made his disposition plain. The letters only compromised his Lordship in general, they did not reveal—the Blow.'

Mr. Wogan, however, only shook his head.

'Faith, now, I'm sorry to hear that,' said he.

'You are glad and sorry on very strange occasions,' said

Kelly, sourly. 'First you are pleased that Mar sold us, and then you are displeased that he did not sell the last secret.'

Mr. Wogan leaned his elbows on the table, and bent across towards his friend.

'I am sorry because the last secret has been sold, and it was not Mar that sold it. Therefore somebody else sold it; therefore I am at the pain of being obliged to suspect a lady who probably knows her late lover's cypher.'

Mr. Kelly blanched.

'And how do you know that the last secret is sold?'

'As any man would know who had not lain abed all the day. George, the Park is full of soldiers. The Tower regiment that we thought Laver had bought is there with the rest under canvas. Ministers would not make an encampment in the Park because they knew that the Bishop had advised the King that nothing was to be done. Therefore Mar is not the only traitor.'

'And why should my Lady Oxford be the Judas?'

'Mainly to punish a certain nonjuring clergyman, for whose sake she is the burden of a ballad, and sung of in coffee houses.'

'A ballad? Of what sort?'

'Of the sort that makes a good whipping-post for a fine lady. Ridicule is the whip, and, by the Lord, it is laid on unsparingly. Perhaps you would like to hear it,' and Mr. Wogan recited, in a whisper, so much of the poem as he judged proper. It closed thus:—

Oh, happy ending to my rhymes,
Consoled for all his woes
The Parson flies to foreign climes,
And dwells—beneath the Rose!

Mr. Kelly swore an oath and took a turn across the room. He came to a stop in front of Sam's bookcase. 'Rose,' said he, in a voice of tenderness, 'sure they might have left the little girl out of it.'

'The barb was venomous, you see,' said Mr. Wogan. 'It was not enough to make a scoff of the lady. She must be stripped of that last consolation, the belief that the discarded Parson wastes in despair. Now she knows that the Parson is consoled. There was spark to powder. The Parson may be putting on flesh. There's an insult to her beauty. Faith, but she must feel it in her marrow, since she risks her Lord's neck for the pleasure of requiting it.'

'No,' said Kelly, 'she could do what she would, for her Lord's neck is not in this noose. Oxford had withdrawn before. He will even vote on the Bishop's trial, if tried he is to be, which seems likely.'

This was news to Mr. Wogan, who had been concerned only with the actual plan of attack, and sufficiently concerned to have no mind for other matters.

'Oxford withdrawn!' he cried, rising and coming across to the Parson. 'Damn him, 'twas pure folly to trust him. Do you remember what Law said that night in Paris? He would trust him no further than he would trust a Norfolk attorney.'

Kelly was silent for a moment, thoughtfully drawing a finger to and fro across the backs of Sam's books.

'I have good reason to remember that night,' he said very sadly. 'Have you forgotten what I said? May nothing come between the Cause and me? Why, it seems the Cause goes down because of me, and with the Cause my friends, and with my friends, Rose.'

Mr. Wogan had no word to say. Whatever excuses rose to his tongue seemed too trivial for utterance.

Kelly's finger stopped on one particular book, travelled away and came back to it. Wogan saw that the book was a Bible. The Parson took it from the shelf and turning over the leaves read a line here and there. Wogan knew very well what was passing through his mind. His thoughts had gone back to the little country parsonage and the quiet life with no weightier matter to disturb it than the trifling squabbles of his parish.

'You warned me, Nick,' he said, 'you warned me. But I was a fool and would not heed. Read that!' and with a bitter sort of laugh he handed the open Bible to Mr. Wogan, pointing to a verse. 'There's a text for the preacher.'

The Bible was open at the Book of Proverbs, and Mr. Wogan read. 'The lips of a strange woman drop as a honey-comb, and her mouth is smoother than oil. But her end is bitter as worm-wood, sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death. Her steps take hold on hell.'

Mr. Wogan read the text aloud.

'The strange woman, Nick,' said Kelly, 'the strange woman, and then in a fierce outburst, 'If I live the man who wrote that ballad shall rue it.'

'They give it to Lady Mary.'

'She never wrote it.'

'Others give it to his Grace of Wharton.'

'He knew nothing of Rose. Nick, who wrote the ballad? How did you get hold of it?'

'I found the Crow, quite tipsy, singing it to Tyrrel, at Burton's, in the little room upstairs.'

'And where did the Crow get the ballad?'

'That is another uncomfortable circumstance. You know Talbot?'

'An honest man, and a good officer, at Preston or in Spain, but a sponge for drink. A pity he was ever let into the plot!'

'Well, he got the ballad from some one with whom he had been drinking at the Little Fox under the Hill, not a fashionable resort.'

'Did he name his friend?'

'He was drunk enough to begin by calling him Mr. Pope.'

'Mr. Pope, the poet?'

'He took that back; and said the poetry put Mr. Pope into his head. The man's real name, he remembered, was Scrutton. I can't guess who he was, friend or spy, but we may take it that he knows what the Crow knows.'

'Thank God for that!' cried Kelly.

'You rejoice on very singular occasions, and are grateful for very small mercies,' said Mr. Wogan, who found it his turn to be surprised. 'What are you so thankful for?'

'Thankful that a woman need not have done this thing, and that my folly may not be the cause of this disaster. Another knew everything—Pope—Scrutton—the ballad! Who wrote the ballad? Who of our enemies knew a word about Rose? Are you blind? Who was at Avignon, spying on me, when I first met Rose? Who hates Lady Oxford no less than he hates me? Whose name was the unhappy tippler trying to remember? Scrutton? Pope?'

'Scrope!' cried Wogan, cursing his own stupidity.

'Scrope it must have been, and the Crow swore that the man told *him* about the plot, and often talked it over.'

'That means, of course, that Scrope made him talk. The old curse of the Cause; that lost us Edinburgh Castle, in the Fifteen, when the Scots stopped at the tavern to powder their hair. Our curse, Nicholas. Wine!'

'And Woman,' Mr. Wogan thought, but George ran on—

'Scrope it was who wrote the ballad, for no enemy but Scrope knew what the writer knew. Lady Mary is a friend, and the Duke knew nothing. Lady Oxford is innocent, thank God—I say it with a humble heart—and I am not the cause of the ruin.'

George's eyes shone like those of a man reprieved. Wogan shook his friend's hand ; his own eyes were opened.

'Tis you are the devil,' he said. 'Scrope has hit everyone he hates, and blown up the plot.'

'His time will come,' said Kelly ; 'but I hear Sam on the stair.'

Mr. Wesley, tapping lightly, entered his room.

'Gentlemen,' he said, 'the outer door is open.'

Mr. Wesley's anxiety was plainly to be read in his face.

The two gentlemen bade him farewell, with many thanks for his hospitality. He accompanied them to the door, and they heard the bolt shot behind them as they stood in the cloister.

'Whither should they go?' both men reflected, silent.

Mr. Wogan has remarked on a certain gaiety and easiness of mind caused on this occasion, he considers, by Mr. Wesley's Florence coming after his own Burgundy at supper. He was also elated by George's elation, for to find innocence in one whom he had suspected elevated Mr. Kelly's temper. They were betrayed, true, but the bitterness of a betrayal by the woman he had loved left him the lighter when the apprehension of it had passed.

One little point rankled in Mr. Wogan's mind in spite of all. Why had Lady Oxford bidden both of them to her rout?

He came at an answer by a roundabout road.

'I must hurry home and burn my papers,' said Kelly, as soon as they were out in the cloister, with the door of the Dean's house shut behind them.

Mr. Wogan, who had other notions, gripped his arm.

'Did you burn my lady's invitation to her rout to-night? What did she say, George? Why did she invite you? And did you burn the note?'

Mr. Kelly smote his hand on his brow. 'My wits were wool-gathering.'

'On Cupid's hedges,' said Wogan.

'But I locked it up.'

'With the rest of the lady's letters in my despatch box?'

'Faith, Nick, you are the devil. How did you know that?'

'Oh, I have divined your amorous use of my box.'

'But you are wrong. I had the box of Mr. Farmer's papers open on the table when I was reading the letter. Mrs. Kilburne knocked at the door. I did not know who it might be. I slipped the letter in on the top of Mr. Farmer's papers, and locked it up before I opened the door.'

'There it remains then? Well, her ladyship's note is in the better company. But what did she say? Did she give a reason for your meeting?'

'The chief thing, after the usual compliments, was that she had most important news, that might not be written, to give me about Mr. Farmer's affairs. Probably she may have had an inkling of the discovery and wished to warn me.'

'We must see her,' said Wogan, whose curiosity was on edge from the first about this party of pleasure.

'But my papers—I must burn my papers.'

'George, you are set, or you are not set. If you had been set the messengers would have been at your lodgings before I went thither; in fact, before you were out of bed. Therefore, either you have the whole night safe or, going home now, you go into a mousetrap, as the French say, and your papers are the cheese to lure you there. Now, they cannot know of my lady's invitations, and if they by any accident did know, a Minister would hardly take a man at a lady's house. That were an ill use for the hostess.'

'That's true,' said Mr. Kelly, after reflecting. 'Nicholas, I knew not that you had so much of the syllogism in your composition.'

Another thing, and an odd thing enough,' added Wogan. 'Perhaps nothing is laid against *you* at all. Did Scrope lay information when he found us at Brampton Bryan?'

'No!' cried Kelly.

'And at Avignon, when a proper spy would have stopped the Duke's gold, he was content with the sword in his own hand.'

'Precisely,' said Wogan.

'Scrope has blown the plot, that's business; but he deals with you himself, that's pleasure. He tried to meet you at Brampton Bryan—he did not have us laid by the heels. He nearly did for you at Avignon, while he left the Duke's business alone, quite content. Now you are alive and he wants a meeting, 'tis clear he did not inform on *you*, otherwise the messengers would have been with you when the soldiers began the camp in the morning. Faith, you may meet Mr. Scrope to-night in St. James's Park. He is a kind of gentleman, Mr. Scrope! But we must see her ladyship first; sure, nothing's safer.'

'Nicholas, thou reasonest well,' said the Parson.

Mr. Wogan towed off his prize, and the pair moved out of the dark, musty cloister into the moonlight.

(To be continued.)

Wall Flowers.

IT is curious how some plants love to grow upon old walls and ruins. Indeed, there are certain species of wild flowers which are seldom found except in such localities. It may be truly said that our ancient churches and cathedrals, the ruins of mediæval castles and of monastic houses, the remains of old city walls, and such like picturesque localities, support a flora of their own.

The most conspicuous example of this interesting flora is the well-known wallflower of our gardens, which is never found in a wild state except upon walls or ruins. But the wall-gilliflower, as it used to be called, is not by any means the only plant which deserves the distinguishing name of *wall flower*. There are many others, of which the snapdragon, the yellow sedum, the wall pennywort, and the pretty little *Draba verna*, or whitlow-grass, will occur to all. In the west of England almost every wayside wall is green with vegetation. The most delicate ferns abound—the wall rue, the ceterach, the maidenhair spleenwort. Go where you will, you will see ferns and flowers growing from the interstices of the stones.

Several of our greatest British rarities belong to the wall-flora. The little *Holosteum umbellatum* used to grow on old walls at Eye, and Bury, and Norwich, and other places in East Anglia. It is now, alas! almost, if not quite, extinct. The walls have been demolished, and the plant is gone. It is still, however, to be found in various parts of Europe; the writer's specimen came from Amiens. The yellow whitlow-grass (*Draba aizoides*) is only to be found on old walls at Pennard Castle, in Wales. The sweet-scented Nottingham catchfly is so called because it was first discovered by a friend of the famous naturalist John Ray growing on the walls of Nottingham Castle. Strange to say, after the burning of the castle in 1830 the plant for a few years completely over-spread the ruins, establishing itself on the walls, in the crevices between the stones, and in every place where it was possible to

obtain a footing. It is still there, though not nearly in such abundance. It was, however, fairly plentiful last summer near the spot known as 'Mortimer's Hole.' On several old walls at Oxford a strange kind of yellow ragwort may be seen. Its proper home is in the south of Europe, but by some means or other it has found its way to Oxford, and evidently means to stay there.

In the county best known botanically to the writer many interesting species of our wall-flora may be seen. Hampshire possesses several fine ruins, and many hundred feet of ancient walls. There is Portchester Castle, and Carisbrooke in the Isle of Wight. There are the ruins of the great Cistercian monasteries of Quarr, of Netley, and of Beaulieu in the New Forest. There are the remains of Titchfield Abbey and Southwick Priory; and ancient walls may be seen at Winchester, at Southampton, and elsewhere.

It may appear almost superfluous to mention the common ivy in connection with walls and ruins. It is so intimately associated with such places that 'an ivy-mantled tower' is regarded as a matter of course. Sometimes, however, the shrub assumes such huge proportions as to call for notice. At Portchester Castle, for instance, it covers the northern face of the Norman keep to the depth of some six or seven feet, and this in spite of the fact that the stems in places have been severed above the ground. One wonders how the hard Norman masonry can provide nourishment for so vast a mass of evergreen. It is strange, however, how large species manage to exist in barren places. An old print of the castle, dated 1761, shows several trees growing on the summit of the broken battlements; and elder-bushes of considerable size still flourish there.

The late Lord Selborne, who was a keen observer of nature, once said that when he was a boy at Winchester he well remembered some fine plants of the red spur-valerian on the tower of the cathedral. It is interesting to know that the plant still flourishes there in considerable abundance, and last year one plant with white flowers was specially conspicuous. On the walls of the close, which shut in the canons' gardens, some plants of *Erigeron acris* will be seen, while the beautiful little ivy-leaved toad-flax is everywhere. It is curious that the illustrious John Ray is silent as to the occurrence of this plant in England, though he mentions it as abounding on damp walls and rocks in Italy, and on the walls of Bâle, in Switzerland. Old Gerarde, however, who gives a very fair woodcut of the plant, says it 'growes wilde upon

walls in Italy, but in gardens with us.' But Parkinson, a contemporary of Gerard, states that 'it groweth naturally in divers places of our land, although formerly it hath not beene knowne to bee but in gardens, as about Hatfield, and other places that are shadie upon the ground.' Since then the plant has spread generally throughout England, and is now found on most ancient walls. In the Isle of Wight, where it is known as 'Roving Jenny' and 'Roving Sailor,' it flourishes at Carisbrooke Castle, on the ruins at Quarr, and on old walls at Shorwell, Knighton, and elsewhere. In America it has acquired the name of Kenilworth Ivy, doubtless from its growing on the walls of that castle which the genius of Scott has made familiar to the world. It abounds on the venerable walls of St. Cross, Winchester, together with the hairy rock-cress, or *Arabis hirsuta*.

Of the plants which love to blossom on ancient walls the most generally distributed is the wallflower. It may be found on all the ruins in Hampshire—at Wolvesey, Netley, Beaulieu, on the Norman keep at Christchurch, where the flowers are of an exceptionally pale colour, at Quarr and Carisbrooke. But nowhere is it to be seen in such profusion as at Portchester. The plants begin to flower early in March, and by the first week in April are in full bloom. They blossom everywhere, on the grey Roman walls, on the mighty Norman keep, on the crumbling Plantagenet ruins. Later on the walls of the great banqueting hall will be gay with the flowers of the red valerian, with here and there a gigantic spike of the yellow mullein. But the appearance of the castle is never so picturesque as when the wallflowers are in bloom.

Another mural plant, nearly allied to the wallflower, but easily to be distinguished by its far paler flowers, is the wall rocket (*Diplotaxis tenuifolia*). It cannot be called rare, and the writer remembers seeing it, among other places, at Dover Castle, at St. Osyth's Priory in Essex, and on the monastic ruins at Dunwich, in Suffolk. But, strange to say, it is only found in Hampshire in one locality. Though we should expect to find it on most of the ancient walls throughout the county, yet, such is the incomprehensible way of plants, it only cares to grow at Southampton, and there on the old town walls which skirt the western shore it blossoms abundantly.

But perhaps the most interesting species of our wall-flora in Hampshire are to be found on the historic walls of Beaulieu Abbey, and probably date back to the days of the Cistercian monks. In early summer the grey walls of the ruined cloisters

are gay with the purple flowers of the wild pink (*Dianthus plumarius*, L.). This plant is the origin of our garden pinks, and is naturalised in a few places in England. But nowhere else in Hampshire is it to be found save on the cloister walls of the abbey of Beaulieu. In company with the wild pink will be seen another plant with an interesting history. This is *Hyssopus officinalis*: probably identical with the hyssop of Scripture. In the middle ages this plant always had a place in the monastic herb-garden, and was much prized for its medicinal properties. 'Hyssop,' says the old Herbal, 'is a very pretty plant, kept for its virtues. It grows two feet high. The flowers are small and stand in long spikes at the tops of the branches; they are of a beautiful blue colour. The whole plant has a strong, but not disagreeable, smell.' The plant was gathered when just beginning to flower, and dried. The infusion, made in the manner of tea, was 'excellent against coughs, hoarsenesses, quinseys, and swellings in the throat.' It also, we are told, 'helps to expectorate tough phlegm, and is effectual in all cold griefs of the chest or lungs.' The monastic herb-garden has now entirely disappeared, but the hyssop remains, and is as fully established as the pellitory, calaminth, and other mural plants which flourish on the picturesque remains of the once 'proud abbaye.'

The pellitory-of-the-wall, a curious plant belonging to the nettle and hop tribe, is one of the most generally distributed of the wall-flora. A medicinal plant of considerable repute in the olden times, it is found at Quarr and Carisbrooke, and also on the ledges and 'greens' which line the almost perpendicular chalk cliffs at Freshwater; most luxuriant, too, on the walls of Portchester and Beaulieu, and many another relic of mediæval magnificence,

Where the mouldering walls are seen
Hung with pellitory green.

Among the most interesting ruins in Hampshire are, beyond question, those of Place House, Titchfield. Originally a Premonstratensian abbey, it was granted at the dissolution of the monasteries to Lord Chancellor Wriothesley, who converted it into a 'righte statelie house embatayled, and having a goodlie gate, and a conducte castelid in the middle of the court of yt.' The 'statelie house,' with which is connected many interesting historical incidents, is now an entire ruin, inhabited only by owls and jackdaws; but the garden is still 'circummured with brick,'

and many flowers blossom on the ancient walls. Of these the most conspicuous is the purple snapdragon, which makes a fine show against the sombre masonry. Here and there the polypody fern has firmly established itself, and several plants of the ivy-leaved lettuce are in flower. In spring, before the antirrhinum is in bloom, rue-leaved saxifrage, a distinguished little plant with glandular hairs and small white flowers, is abundant all along the summit of the walls. In such places various kinds of grasses are always to be found, but not often species of much interest. Exception must, however, be made in favour of one brome-grass which is found, so far as the writer knows, in one spot only in Hampshire. This is *Bromus madritensis*, L., and with great discernment it has chosen the stately ruins of Netley as its habitat.

But few wall-loving ferns are to be found in this part of England, and these have a tendency to become scarcer. In Gilbert White's time both the ceterach and the rue-leaved spleenwort were to be seen on the walls of Selborne Church. Both these have entirely disappeared, and also *Asplenium Trichomanes* in 'Temple Lane.' The ceterach only just manages to maintain an existence in Hampshire. The writer knew of a single plant at Portchester, and it may still be found in one or two other localities. The maidenhair spleenwort is commoner, but it is not to be seen in such abundance as in 1624, when Gerarde tells us that 'Mr. Goodyer saw enough to lode an horse growing on the banks in a lane, as he rode between Rake and Headly neere Wollmer Forest.' The rue-leaved spleenwort (*A. Ruta muraria*, L.) is fairly well distributed both in the island and on the mainland. In some localities, as up the Meon Valley, it is comparatively common, and may be seen on many an old wall, including that of the Saxon church of Corhampton.

One more plant must be mentioned. Everyone knows the yellow biting stonecrop, so common on our rockeries and garden walls. This well-known plant has a very scarce first-cousin with thick leaves and pure white flowers, which at the beginning of the century flourished on the church walls of one particular parish in the Isle of Wight. This church has since been restored, outside as well as inside, but it is satisfactory and interesting to know that *Sedum dasyphyllum* still maintains a happy and prosperous existence in its old home.

JOHN VAUGHAN.

A Farmer's Year.

BEING HIS COMMONPLACE BOOK FOR 1898.

X.

Cutting out Swedes—Magistrates and Conscientious Objectors—The Divorced Game-cock—The Advantages of Baby Beef—The Process of Thatching—Splitting of Soil by Beet Bulbs—Destruction of Beet by the Horse Hoe—Buying a Reaper—Proposed Agreements for Harvest—Boarding out of London Children—A Rise of Swallows—Galvanised Roofs for Stacks—The Bedingham Hay Crop—Underbred Cattle—Rain at Last—Drilling Maize and Mustard—The Swallows and their Egg—An Ancient Farm—An Old-fashioned Couple—A Primrose League Fête—Sale of Red Poll Heifers—Red-weed and Rabbits—Hare and Rabbits Bill—Price of Fat Stock at Harleston—The Harvest Bargain—Martha, Jane, and Babette—Fight between Threshers and a Whale—The Natural Law—A Wet Day—The Dead Foal—An African Snow Scene—The Work of Messrs. Garton—Agricultural Distress as a Subject for Jest—Cause of Death of Foal—Fool's Parsley—The New Ewes—The Beginning of Harvest—The Reaper at Work—Offers for Bedingham—Layer in Barley—Lady Farmers of the Old Sort—Cost of Repairs—A Tree Tragedy—Summer Fallowing and 'Maffies'—Barley Mowing—A Confusion of Terms—A Hawking Owl—A Rabbit Hunt—Result of Over-manuring Wheat—Mysterious Successes in Agriculture—Carting Pease—Horse-bees at Work—Charges for Chemical Analysis—The Humming of Gnats.

JULY 20.—Yesterday and to-day have been much colder, with the usual north-east wind; indeed, this evening the temperature is down to fifty. The glass also is rising and the ground already grows steely with drought. Three men—all that can be spared from the hay—are engaged in cutting out the swedes on Baker's No. 34, a slow and arduous job owing to the hardness of the land. In order to get room for their hoes they work leaving a row untouched between each man, which is dealt with on the next journey down the lines. When, as is the case on Baker's, the land is poisoned with rubbish and there is a full plant of swedes, the cutting of them out is rather a delicate operation, as about a dozen plants are destroyed for every one that is left hanging limply by a mere filament of root, from which the hoe has dragged away the earth in clearing the surrounding weeds. It is astonishing that these little plants can pick themselves up again after

such rough treatment; but return to the field in a week or so, especially if there has been a shower of rain, and you will find them standing stiff and straight and not a little improved by the thinning of the family. 'One man dead, another man's bread,' runs the old Boer saying. It applies to plants as well as to human beings.

I see in the paper to-day that the Government has given way suddenly on the Vaccination Bill, and that henceforth 'conscientious objection' on the part of parents is to entitle them to disregard the law and neglect the vaccination of their children. It appears, and this is my reason for talking about the matter here, that we magistrates are to decide whether the objection in each case is one of conscience or of mere prejudice and idleness; that is to say, that we are to sift a man's mind and, without any evidence beyond his own statement, to decide whether he is speaking the truth. I maintain that the task is impossible, and one which should not be laid upon the shoulders of any judge. In practice, what will probably happen is that the chairman or clerk will ask the objecting parent if he or she is prepared to take an oath that his or her objection to the vaccination of the child is founded on conscientious scruples. The parent or guardian will reply that he is, and there will be an end of the matter.

These safeguards even, such as they are, will scarcely stand, for what official or Board of Guardians will go to the expense and worry of instituting prosecutions to which the answer is so easy and complete? My belief is, that knowing this, but a small proportion of anti-vaccinationists will take the trouble even to apply for a certificate.¹ One may be certain, too, that henceforth the workings of conscience upon this matter will be marvellously quickened among certain classes. If the same test could be applied to the case of sending children to school, in six months the classrooms would be half emptied by 'conscientious objections.' A falsehood is easily spoken, and such an Act seems to put a premium on

¹ This view seems to have been borne out by returns recently issued by the Local Government Board. I take the following report from a newspaper:—

'This return shows that between the date of the passing of the Act and the 31st December 1898, the number of certificates of conscientious objection received by the vaccinating officers was 203,413, and that the number of children to whom such certificates related was 230,147. It is explained that the number of unvaccinated children in England and Wales at the time of the passing of the Act in respect of whom certificates under Section 2 might have been applied for cannot be stated, but over 12,500,000 births were registered during the years 1885-98, and the total number of children, including all who died before vaccination, not reported as having been vaccinated may be taken at 3,235,000.'

It is not a pleasant thought that, allowing for the deaths, there are at the present moment something under three million unvaccinated young persons moving about amongst us.

the speaking of it. Among tens of thousands of the population, by consent of the State, vaccination, perhaps one of the greatest boons that the century has brought to mankind, will henceforth cease to exist. Never before, I believe, at least in these enlightened days, has such sanction been given to the pestilent theory that 'freedom' consists in giving a man the right to gratify his own whim, however insane and mischievous, at the cost of society at large, and never before has the doctrine of the power of the parent over his offspring been pushed so far. In future an indolent, or a prejudiced, or a 'conscience-stricken' father or guardian is to be licensed at will to expose children to the ravages of a fearful sickness and the risk of death, and, helpless though they are, it is by Act of Parliament decreed that no hand shall be held up to save them. Whatever the political advantages, this appears to be a heavy responsibility for a Government to bind upon its shoulders, especially, as I gather from the reports and the speeches, that, together with ninety-five per cent. or more of those who constitute the present House of Commons, every member of it is a firm believer in vaccination, and knows well what may happen to those who cease to vaccinate. O Liberty, what things——

It seems a pity that the leaders of the anti-vaccination party, who, no doubt, are very honest in their beliefs, cannot, as I have done when a small-pox epidemic is raging, travel in foreign parts where that prophylactic is unknown or little practised. I think that they would come back with their views much modified. At present they think little of the disease because they have scarcely seen it at its dreadful work. What they lack is imagination. Well, I have heard that Jenner prophesied that it would be so.

As I am discussing the subject, here is an object-lesson in small-pox which I submit to the consideration of these enthusiasts. The tale reaches me from far Venezuela, and I believe the facts to be accurately stated, although I cannot guarantee the details, which I have no opportunity of verifying. In the course of a recent epidemic the small-pox struck the unvaccinated, or very slightly vaccinated, town of Valencia, whereof the population is estimated at 35,000. Out of this population, speaking roughly, 8,000 were treated at the small-pox hospital, 4,000 of whom died. These numbers, however, do not include those treated in private houses, who were many. Also everyone who could escape from the place did so, till at length it became as a city of the dead, so that the percentage of cases to population must have been much larger than the figures quoted above would suggest, especially as no precautionary

measures were taken, at any rate before the outbreak. By this time the authorities at the capital, Caracas, had become alarmed and set to work to do their best to enforce compulsory vaccination of its inhabitants. In due course the plague struck this city also, which has a population estimated at 80,000, as against 35,000 at Valencia. Here, however, after the compulsory vaccination, the results were very different, for (not counting the cases treated in private houses, for which no figures are available) the patients numbered only 400, a curious contrast to the 8,000 at Valencia. As the hygienic conditions of the two towns are reported to be practically the same, these figures seem to be remarkable.

I have been very much amused to-day watching the behaviour of a game-cock which, for dynastic reasons, has been separated from his harem and removed out of the horse-yard Buildings to All Hallows farm. Last night he was carried off and this morning Hood set him at liberty, whereon he departed towards home literally *ventre-à-terre*. Apparently, however, he could not find his way there, for afterwards I discovered him in the Home-farm stackyard trying to attract to himself a hen of light and wandering mind. This he did by scratching in the dust and making pretence that he had found something particularly nice to eat. I know that it was a pretence, for, from where I stood, I could see that there was nothing at all, although he pecked violently and pretended to swallow, calling all the while. Finally the light-minded hen was attracted, and came up to see what could be got, although with doubts, for the lawful rooster, a Dorking, was watching these proceedings from a distance with a threatening and lurid eye. Her disgust when she found that there was nothing was very comic, and away she marched. This evening I found that poor divorced cock roosting quite alone in the exact centre of a large hen-house, which the fowls do not use during summer, as they seem to prefer to sleep in the trees. I suppose that sooner or later there will be a battle, but, oddly enough, the game-cock does not seem to seek the encounter.

To-day two of the little steers at Bedingham were sold to the butcher for 27*l.* the pair. I estimate—'lay' is the local term—their weight when cleaned at about thirty-five stone, but I suppose that the butcher thinks that they will weigh more, as 7*s.* a stone is the average price for prime beef. These young things—they are under two years old—make the best and most saleable beef, and perhaps for this reason he may be willing to give a little more for them. The day of heavy three and four year old cattle, at

any rate in this neighbourhood, is gone by, and as a rule the price they bring does not compensate the grazier for the extra expense of their keep for so long a time.

July 21.—To-day Buck has been at work thatching the haystack in the buildings stackyard, with the assistance of young Fairhead, who looks about sixteen, but is, I believe, a married man. This is the process. A quantity of straw is placed in a heap and soaked with buckets of water to soften it; otherwise it would not 'lie.' Buck, seated close by, draws from a bundle, which for the last few days has been 'tempering' in a pond, some of the broaches that Rough Jimmy split a few months ago. These he sharpens at either end, and then, holding the broach in both hands, wrings it in the centre to make it pliable. When the broaches are prepared, he and his assistant go to a heap of coarse hay which is handy. Here Fairhead fixes a wisp of the hay on to an instrument called a bond crank, that is, a bent iron with a hook at the end of it, and two hand pieces of elder wood, so arranged that by holding one in the left hand and turning the other with the right the hook revolves and twists the hay into a long grass rope or bond as it is deftly drawn from the heap by Buck. These bonds, when of sufficient length, Buck winds into a sort of rough spool with a broach for the centre of it, much as a fishing line is wound on to a stick.

When enough of these spools are prepared, he mounts the tall ladder that is laid against the stack and Fairhead brings him a bundle of straw fastened with a rope, which bundle is secured on the side of the stack by means of broaches, against which it rests. Drawing out handfuls of straw from the bundle, he lays them neatly on the slope, tucking them in where necessary and drawing them smooth with an instrument called a thatching comb. Then he takes one of the bond-spools and, undoing the end of it, lays the bond across the straw, fastening it in place by the doubled-up broaches which, in shape and purpose, resemble rough hairpins, driving them home into the stack by means of a thatching mallet. For this covering up of haystacks two lines of bonds are generally used, with others, which are arranged in a kind of dog-tooth pattern at the ends of the stack.

Buck and his assistant, beginning to work at this stack, which may contain eighteen or twenty tons of hay, after breakfast, had finished it by evening. For quick thatching, however, three hands are required: one to make ready the bonds, broaches, &c., one to carry the bundles of straw up the ladder, and one to lay and fasten them.

If, as in the present case, the hay is very dense and hard, the thatching takes a little more time, as it is not easy to force the broaches home into the body of the stack.

July 23.—Yesterday I found Buck putting in a spare hour or two after he had finished milking, hoeing beet on All Hallows field, No. 29. Here the ground is so hard that in places the swelling bulbs of the beet have actually split the soil about them. Buck, who, as I have said before, is a critic, is of opinion that this hardness is chiefly caused by the land having been rolled for drilling when too wet. I think, however, that the drought has a good deal to do with it. I find that my half-dozen little beets, which I transplanted in this field, are looking green and flourishing, but I must admit that they are not so large as the beet which have not been transplanted.

About three in the afternoon a soft shower came on, which continued at intervals until 10 o'clock at night. Although it has stopped the hay-carting, this rain, light as it is, is most welcome, as the young swedes and white turnips are beginning to suffer much from drought, and the shorn pastures sadly need refreshment to start them into growth again. Unless we have some wet before harvest I fear that the aftermath will be scanty.

To-day is stormy, but without rain. Whitrup has been at work with the flat hoe cleaning the beet on No. 23. Going to the field after he left it, I found that this instrument had worked considerable havoc to the roots as well as to the weeds, as a great many beautiful beet were broken off and destroyed. Damage of this sort is difficult to avoid, especially if the ground is hard, as the leaves of the beet catch in the hoe and the roots are snapped in an instant. In this case it is wise to take the wrench and set the knives a little closer together, as it is better that a few weeds should escape than that good beet should be destroyed, especially in a year when the plant is not too thick.

After many doubts Hood and I have come to the decision that we had best buy the reaper. To this there are two alternatives; to do without a machine altogether and trust to the old-fashioned scythe, that is very slow where the extent of ground to be dealt with is considerable, especially in this uncertain climate, which may set in wet at any time. The other is to hire a machine, as we did once before. Now, the rent of a reaper would not be less than 5*l.*, and it may be hazarded that the instrument would be of bad make and quality, as people do not buy good machines to let out to anybody who asks for them. Therefore, especially when

the risks of breakage and consequent delay, which are many in the case of such a machine, are taken into consideration, it seems scarcely worth while to hire at a fifth of the price of a new instrument.

This year we are going to make our agreement with the men for the *harvest*. This means that, allowing an approximate area of twelve acres of corn crop per head to be cut, carried, stacked and thatched, each man will receive about 7*l.* for the work. In fact it is piece work, and the sooner the hands get through with it and put their 7*l.* into their pockets, the sooner they will be able to get back to labour at their ordinary wage. It should be added that, in return for the use of the reaper, which, of course, saves time and lessens their toil considerably, they will be expected to undertake a certain amount of root cleaning when necessary. The alternative plan—a very bad one in my opinion, which we adopted last year—is that the men should be paid 7*l.* for the month. Under this system, if they got through the harvest under a month, they would have to return to their ordinary work for such days as remained without wage, their labour having been purchased for the full time. If, on the other hand, the harvest is prolonged beyond a month, they are expected to complete it at the ordinary rate of wage. Under these circumstances, as Mr. Hodge is human, it is scarcely to be expected that he will get on quite as quickly as he does when he is paid by the piece. Indeed, I believe that there are many instances upon record of things being so nicely timed that the harvest is finished on the evening of the last day of the appointed month.

At the farmhouse of a neighbour this afternoon I saw two little boys, who told me that they are the sons of a pastry-cook in the neighbourhood of the Edgware Road. They are two of about a dozen children which have been sent by some charity to be boarded out for a fortnight in the village at a price of 5*s.* a week per head. I can imagine no truer kindness than that of those good people who thus enable these poor city-bred children to enjoy a fortnight of pure country air to the great benefit of their minds and bodies. I hope that this work may prosper and increase, as there is unlimited room for the accommodation of such children, and many respectable village women would be only too glad to take them in and feed them well for 5*s.* a week.

July 25.—This afternoon, in walking over the Thwaite field, No. 28, to look at the carrots and young swedes, which are suffering from drought, I saw a curious thing. Over the field, skimming

here, there, and everywhere in the air, but within the area of a well-defined circuit, were two or three hundreds of swallows and martins, all of them busy in the ceaseless consumption of some invisible insects. I suppose that the 'fly' was in the air, and that this was a 'rise' of swallows collected to take advantage of it. As they were hawking within so limited a space, it would seem to show that these myriads of tiny flies on which they feed pass from place to place in swarms.

July 31.—On Wednesday we began carting the hay from Baker's Marsh, No. 46. It is a very good crop, a ton and a half an acre, I should say. I believe that shutting this field down so late has, in fact, improved the turf, as it gave the fine grasses time to get up before they were overshadowed by the coarser growing sorts. Before we began to cart, some of the men were employed fixing the galvanised iron roofs on to two of the haystacks in the home yard. These roofs, though not ornamental (what, I wonder, would our forefathers have said had they been asked to thatch their stacks with tin?), are exceedingly useful. I bought them four or five years ago, in a season when, owing to the drought, we had literally no straw left with which to thatch, at a cost, if I remember rightly, of about 4*l.* 10*s.* each. Since then they have been in use every year, and the hay protected by them has invariably been found to be as sweet and good immediately under the iron as in any other part of the stack. The roofs themselves consist of an iron ridge with grooves, to which are hung the galvanised sheets. When the stack has sufficiently settled, these sheets are fastened to the hay by long corkscrew-shaped pins, which, if properly driven home, secure them against any wind, although, in the course of years, the iron is apt to get torn at the eyelet holes and corners. One disadvantage of these roofs is that the stacks must be built to fit them, and another that they undoubtedly look ugly in a farm yard, though this fault might be mitigated by painting them straw-colour. This I have always intended to do, but as yet we have never found time to be æsthetic.

At Bedingham on Wednesday afternoon I found all the hay up, though a few loads of it were still standing upon the carts and waggons ready to top up the stack when it settles. According to my measurements, which may be inaccurate, I think that we have thirty-four or five tons of excellent hay on the two Bedingham stacks, a good crop off a farm of a hundred acres on which no clover layer has been grown this year. But throughout the country the cut of grass is one of the largest that has been

secured for many years, so hay will be cheap. Indeed, I doubt whether valuers will lay it at much more than 2*l.* the ton on the stack. This, however, will not hurt farmers who have any to spare, and can afford to save it. Hay, if re-thatched, will keep five or six years, and perhaps before that time has come and gone it may fetch nearer 7*l.* than 2*l.* the ton. Here, alas! we have so many mouths to feed that even in plentiful years forage seems to melt away almost to the last stalk; I doubt if at the present moment we have more than a truss or so of the crop of 1897 left upon the place.

Every farmer must be thankful that this, the first harvest of the year, has been secured in plenty, and, on the whole, in such good order. Here, at the beginning of haysel, we had one field of layer, No. 45, badly damaged by the wet, and more than half of the stuff on Baker's Marsh is still out, but all the rest is safe and snug upon the stacks, and to the farmer's eye hay always looks best upon a stack. I think that here, at Ditchingham, so near as I can estimate, we must have carried about a hundred tons.

On my way back from Bedingham I went to look at some yearling cattle belonging to a tradesman in Bungay, who has taken them over for a debt, and wishes to dispose of them at the price they were valued at to him, namely, 6*l.* 10*s.* each. About six of these I found to be fair-looking animals, not polled, but 'slug-horned,' that is, with horns about the size and shape of a large sausage. On the whole they are a coarse-bred lot, and I think that 6*l.* each would be plenty to pay for them; indeed, I do not know that they will suit us at all. Our difficulty here is to buy well-bred things. It would seem that anything with four legs and a tail is good enough for a Norfolk farmer to breed from. He will not understand that good blood means good beef, and, what is more, quickly grown beef.

The morning of the 28th was sunless, but we managed to draw up two loads of hay from Baker's Marsh. Just as the men were returning there with the carts after dinner, a slight shower came on, which stopped them, but they were able to get some of the made hay into cock. About half-past five it came on to rain in good earnest—a welcome sight indeed to farmers who have been watching the earth grow harder day by day while the mangold remained almost at a standstill and the young swedes languished and began to turn blue. When the rain began to be heavy I walked round the farm, visiting some of the root-fields. I know of no more pleasant experience after a long period of drought

than to stand in such a field watching the dry earth suck up the bounteous downpour, and the green things gather life and increase as they draw it into their tissues. What smell is there half so good as the smell of the soil new-washed by rain? People who only go out walking in fine weather miss much; the best time to walk, in my opinion, is in the snow, the wet, and the storm.

Friday, the 29th, was cold and overcast, with occasional light showers driven by a high north-east wind. On the farm we took advantage of the welcome wet to plough the headlands and drill maize on that part of the vetch field, No. 21, which was fed off with sheep. Of course it is late to sow this crop even for the only purpose for which we use it—green fodder; but the ground has been so hard that we have been unable to get it in before. If we have a warm August and September, however, which are surely due to us after so cold a summer, I hope that it will still furnish a good cut for the cows in autumn. There are few fodders that they like better than the stalks of this Indian corn after they have gone through the cutter. They are an excellent milk-producing food, and, as I have learned in Africa, horses will grow fat upon them.

Yesterday we were sowing mustard broadcast and drilling white turnips upon the headlands, which have been ploughed and harrowed to receive them. Even if they never grow very large, these headland white turnips make a welcome bite for the sheep in autumn, while the mustard is always useful, especially to give a flavour to chaff, or to be fed off by sheep.

At Bedingham I find that in one of the fields, No. 6, the wheat, which here is very tall and strong, is in places laid by the wind and rain. The white turnips which were drilled there where the swedes failed are a first-rate plant. Even if no more rain falls for another month or so, I think that they should now make a crop, for this stiff Bedingham clay holds the moisture, and here the saying, that 'drought never yet made dearth,' is certainly true.

The reader may remember my entries about the swallows that build in the porch. After the adventures of one of them in this house at night they sat, and in due course produced one young bird only, which has now been reared to maturity and flown. Thinking that the coldness of the season had caused the remaining eggs to be unfertile, as chanced with all of them two years ago, I examined the nest in order to remove the rotten eggs, so that, if the swallows wished, they could again make use of it. It was quite empty. The eggs have not been thrown out of the

nest, for, if so, they would have lodged upon the board underneath it; so it is clear either that the swallows have carried them right away, or that only one egg was laid. I believe the latter to be the explanation. Perhaps it was the hen bird which passed the night in the house. If so, would it not be possible that the shock given to its system by fright may have prevented it from producing more than one egg? Perhaps some naturalist can answer the question.

To-day is beautiful, by far the finest which we have yet experienced this summer. In the afternoon I rode over to Denton, a village some six miles away, where there is a small farm belonging to this property. The house on it is very ancient, probably early Tudor; indeed, some very beautiful oak panelling that I removed from it to this place can scarcely be later than that date. From the shape of the portion that is now standing I imagine it to be the remains of a larger building, of which parts have been pulled down as it fell into disrepair. Such fragments of houses are common about here; indeed, there is one of them at my own gate, which is so old that it had to be strapped up in 1613, as is proved by the 'anchors' let into the wall, whereof the faces fashion that date in wrought iron. I suppose that all these dwellings in the times of the Plantagenets and the Tudors were the homes of yeomen who owned or farmed from one to three hundred acres of land. Or, possibly, they were in many cases the farm houses let with the holding. That tenant farmers were common so early as 1560 we learn from Thomas Tusser's rhymes, for he talks of the taking over of farms at Michaelmas as a familiar thing.

At Michaelmas lightly new farmer comes in,
New Husbandry forceth him new to begin;
Old farmer still taking the time to him given,
Makes August to last until Michaelmas even.

Good farm and well stored, good housing and dry,
Good corn and good dairy, good market and nigh;
Good shepherd, good tillman, good Jack and good Gill,
Make husband and huswife their coffers to fill.

Nor does the country—he farmed in Suffolk and at East Dereham, in Norfolk—seem to have been so lonely as might be imagined, for he talks of journeys to market, and of the visits of chapmen or dealers. Indeed, I believe that the enormous increase of the population in England has taken place in the towns only,

and that the country was almost as thickly populated in the times of the Henrys as it is to-day. The size and number of the churches show it, as do the death entries in the earlier registers.

This ancient Denton farm has fitting tenants in the aged couple who occupy it. Their name is Skinner, and they are eighty, or over, both of them, but still hale and handsome; we discovered them sitting in the quaint porch of the house reading the Bible, as old folks should do on Sunday afternoon. They have both of them been connected with this property, or in the service of its owners, all their lives; indeed, the old man's father was gardener to this house and died here, while so far back as fifty years ago he himself was steward for the land which I now farm. When he dies, which I trust may not be for many years, there will vanish a fine specimen of the old stamp of tenant-farmer, of whom so few remain; one who loved his land, and did not look upon the landlord as his natural enemy.

I walked over the farm with the old gentleman, and found it cultivated like a garden. I think that his beans and beet are the best that I have seen this year.

August 1.—To-day the weather has been lovely, which is fortunate, as the annual Primrose League fête of the Ditchingham Habitation was held in Ellingham Park. I think that there must have been quite two thousand people present, all of whom seemed to enjoy themselves very much wandering about on the green grass and under the beautiful trees. For amusements there were open-air theatricals, swing boats, cocoanut shies, and that most fascinating of sports, a shooting gallery, where the skilful may break glass balls and knock over tin animals; supplemented of course by a liberal tea and dancing in the evening. Then there were the speeches, which, in my opinion, are the least popular part of the entertainment, although, together with a fair proportion of the male sex, a large number of ladies and their offspring listened to them with rapt attention and were, I trust, duly instructed upon imperial matters. I forget who invented the Primrose League, but he was certainly a political genius, who had mastered the great fact that the majority of people detest unmitigated politics and love entertainments and threepenny teas, and that of those who enjoy the entertainments and absorb the tea, a proportion, at any rate, will reward the party which provides them with their support. The affair was very well managed and a great success, but shouting patriotic sentiments from a waggon is tiring to the throat. At last year's festivity, however, I was much more

arduously employed, for the advertised speaker having telegraphed suddenly to say that a toothache prevented him from attending, I was called on to fill his place. For me that meant three-quarters of an hour of unpremeditated and al-fresco oratory.

To-day we have finished carting the hay from Baker's Marsh, No. 46; also I sold two young red-poll heifers to a clergyman in this neighbourhood for 10*l.* apiece. Considering how they are bred it is not a very high price, but of course more than they would fetch upon the market and more than they are worth to keep for fattening purposes. I am rapidly coming to the conclusion, however, that it is a mistake to consign so many of these pedigree animals to the butcher. They have some of the best blood in East Anglia in their veins and ought to be worth more to sell for stock purposes, although, of course, it is hard for the small breeder like myself to compete with the large and well-advertised herds.

August 2.—To-day we are hoeing root upon the farm, of which there is a deal to be got through before harvest begins. On my way back from the root field I went to look at the pease on No. 37, and found them absolutely scarlet with red-weed or poppies, to which this land is very liable. If possible we propose to cut them a little green so as to kill the thistles and poppies before they shed their seed abroad.

I also inspected the carrots on the Thwaite field, No. 28, to find that the rabbits are doing them much damage. These pestilent vermin, which are unusually numerous this year, for they bred all the winter through, come at night and bite out the crowns, an injury from which the plants never quite recover. Although many people have grumbled at it, certainly the Hare and Rabbits Bill has proved a most useful measure; that is, to those who avail themselves honestly of its provisions and do not make it an excuse for poaching. As I know from bitter experience, there is nothing more maddening to a farmer than to see his crops injured, or perhaps destroyed, by these mischievous brutes, which, if there should chance to be any coverts or sandy banks in the neighbourhood, it is almost impossible to keep under, however much one may shoot, snare, or trap. A single nest of them in a barley field will destroy the yield of quite a large area of the corn; indeed I am inclined to think that they do even more damage to growing corn than to root-crops. Perhaps, however, they are most troublesome in the case of young trees, for wire these in as one will, they manage to burrow beneath the fence and to kill the saplings by gnawing the sweet bark off the stem.

August 6.—Last Wednesday Hood went to Harleston market, which is a very good one, in the hope of picking up some young home-bred beasts at a moderate figure. This he did not succeed in doing, but he reports that fat cattle were selling as low as six shillings a stone. This is an utterly unremunerative price, caused by the plentiful root-crop of last year, but now the beet is done and poor farmers have to empty their yards and take what they can get. Yesterday and the day before we were horse and hand hoeing the root, and to-day, which is dull with heavy showers of rain, we are carting coal as well. To-day, also, we have finally arranged with the men for the forthcoming harvest.

It will be remembered that this can be done on two systems: namely, the hands can agree for a month, after which, should the in-gathering take longer, they must complete it at their ordinary wage; or they can agree for 'the harvest,' receiving a lump sum, be it long or short. Under this arrangement, of course, it is to their interest to get through their task at the greatest possible rate of speed, since every day saved is a day upon which they can be earning wage over and above the stipulated sum. It is perfectly marvellous how hard men will labour under this system of piece work. At Ditchingham this year we have about ninety-one acres of corn to be gathered by seven men, each man receiving 7*l.* 10*s.*, including the hiring shilling to be paid according to ancient custom. Query—Is this hiring shilling the origin of the queen's shilling given to a recruit on his enlistment? For this the hands are to do all that is necessary; that is, to cut, to carry, to stack, to trim, &c., thatching alone excepted. It will be seen that the average area to each man is thirteen acres, which is two above what is usual. This is accounted for by the fact that I intend to purchase the reaper, which will be thrown into the harvest for the men to use wherever corn can be cut with it to advantage. Of course such a machine means an enormous saving of labour, but it cannot always be set to work, as it will not deal satisfactorily with laid and twisted corn.

At Bedingham we have thirty-five acres of corn to be dealt with by three men and one boy, each man receiving 7*l.*, and the boy 2*l.* 10*s.* This allows ten acres for each man, and five acres for the boy. The hands, who do everything except thatch the stacks, also undertake to go once through the piece of white turnips on No. 18 with the hand-hoe. It will be observed that their rate of money is ten shillings less than that to be paid upon

this farm, the reason being that, although they have no reaper to help them, the area to be dealt with by their labour is also less.

Here at Ditchingham the cow-man, Buck, and a boy stand out of the harvest and are paid no extra money, although Buck will have to undertake the thatching of the stacks. In compensation, however, of his receiving no harvest money, he is given a cottage valued at 4*l.* a year rent free. In addition to his thatching he and Hood between them will have to manage the milking of the cows and take care of the cattle.

Eleven is the average number of acres which an able-bodied man is supposed to be able to harvest. That is the extent arranged for with his labourers by a neighbouring farmer in this village. These men, however, are to receive 7*l.* 7*s.* each, and their bargain includes the thatching of the stacks. In this case there is no reaper to assist them, and the straw of his crops is supposed to be stouter than mine, an important item in reckoning up the amount of work to be done.

This afternoon I went to examine the reaper, which I have purchased, that is being put together at the foundry in Bungay. It is an American machine, very light but strong in make, and seems well fitted for our work.

In a greenhouse in this garden I have two tame toads, named Martha and Jane respectively. Also there is a tiny one called Babette,¹ but she can hardly be counted, as she is small and seldom on view.

These toads are strange and interesting creatures, differing much from each other in appearance and character. Martha is stout and dark-coloured, a bold-natured toad of friendly habit; Jane, on the other hand, is pale and thin, with a depressed air which suggests resignation born of long experience of circumstances over which she has no control. Some of this depression may be due to the fact that once, entering the greenhouse in the twilight, I trod upon her accidentally, a shock from which she seems never to have recovered, although, owing to the adaptive powers of toads, beyond a slight flattening she took no physical harm from an adventure which must have been painful. Indeed, I am not sure that of the two of us I did not suffer most, for I know of few things more upsetting than the feel of a fat toad beneath one's foot. Anyhow, since that day Jane has never quite trusted me. These toads I feed with lobworms, or sometimes with woodlice and centipedes taken from traps made of hollowed-out potatoes,

¹ Martha, there is reason to fear, has recently eaten Babette.

which are set among the flowerpots to attract such creatures. In the latter case, the insects must be thrown before the toad, which never seems to see them until they begin to run, although, its ears being quick, it can sometimes hear them as they move along the floor behind it.

When a toad catches sight of an insect its attitude of profound repose changes suddenly to one of extraordinary animation. Its swivel eyes seem to project and fix themselves upon the doomed creature off which it is about to lunch; its throat begins to palpitate with violence and its general air betrays intense and concentrated interest. Presently, from contemplation it proceeds to action. By slow but purposeful movements of its crooked limbs it advances, pauses and advances again, till at length it reaches a position which it considers convenient. Then, just as the centipede gains a sheltering pebble, a long pink flash seems to proceed from the head of the toad. That is its tongue. Another instant and the pink thing has twisted itself round the insect and retired into the capacious mouth, and there, once more wrapped in deep peace and rest, sits the toad, its eyes turned in pious thankfulness to heaven, or, rather, to the roof of the greenhouse. The other day even I saw Martha take a woodlouse off her own head. Mistaking the nature of its foothold, the insect had been so unfortunate as to run up her back, and, becoming aware of the tickling of its little feet, Martha guessed the situation and acted on it.

If the observer wishes to see what my old gardener calls 'the beauty of the thing,' woodlice and centipedes undoubtedly provide the best show, but for real grim earnest, for a perfect microcosm of the struggle for existence in which somebody has to go down, the spectacle of Martha meeting with a selected lobworm is to be recommended. In this instance she sees the thing at once, for it is long, active, and shiny (toads will not touch anything that is dead), and instantly clears for action. Creeping forward with a dreadful deliberation, she arches her neck over the worm, considering it with her beady eye. Then, as it begins to take refuge beneath the shingle—for worms seem to understand that toads are no friends to them—Martha pounces and grips it by the middle. Next comes a long strain, like that of a thrush dragging at a brandling in the garden, and after the strain, the struggle.

Heavens! what a fight it is! Magnify the size of the combatants by five hundred, and no man would dare to stay to look at it. The worm writhes and rolls; Martha, seated on her haunches,

beats its extremities with her front paws—cramming, pushing, gulping, and lo! gradually the worm seems to shorten. Shorter it grows, and shorter yet. It is vanishing into Martha's inside. And now nothing is left but a little pink tip projecting from the corner of her mouth, in appearance not unlike that of a lighted cigar.

The tip vanishes, and you think that the tragedy is over. But no; presently there is a convulsion, followed by a resurrection as frantic as it is futile. Again the war is waged—this time more feebly; and soon, once more shrouded in holy calm as in a garment, Martha sits smiling at the roof of the greenhouse, reflecting probably upon worms that she swallowed years before anybody now living was born. But as a matter of curiosity one would like to know what is happening inside of her. Clearly her digestive fluids must be of the best.

I imagine that toads live a great while—at least that is the impression among country people. Old men will declare even that they have known a certain toad all their lives; but this proves nothing, for some descendant may so exactly resemble its ancestor as to deceive the most careful observer.

The sight of Martha wrestling with a very large worm always reminds me of a seldom seen combat which it was once my good fortune to behold between a thresher (*Alopias vulpes*) or threshers, for I could not be sure whether there was one or more of them, and a large whale. What the exact connection in my mind may be I cannot say, for the creatures concerned are different indeed in size, but I fancy that it has to do with the ferocity of the efforts made in either case by the attacker and its victim. Never shall I forget that titanic scene. The huge whale lay floundering and blowing upon the surface of the sea, into whose depths from time to time he tried to sink; but whenever he began to 'sound' something always seemed to prevent him. Whether this failure was owing to the action of a swordfish working away at the whale underneath, in order to keep him on the top of the water while the thresher or threshers attended to business above, is more than I can say. I have been told, however, that these two varieties of fish enter into partnership for this murderous purpose, with the result that, notwithstanding his size and strength, the whale attacked has about as much chance against them as the log that lies between the top and bottom sawyer has of escaping unsevered from the pit. So there the agonised and stricken creature rolled wallowing in a fringe of bloody foam, while continually the great butcher-fish leapt

high into the air, as he fell striking Behemoth such a blow upon the head or back with his fearful tail that the sound of it echoed far over the ocean.

The last act of this tragedy of the seas was seen by no mortal eye, for ere the end came our ship had passed out of sight of it. But I think that it was near at hand, and that before we were hulled down the cruel sea-foxes and the swordfish, with their retinue of sharks, were tearing the tongue and blubber in huge lumps from the throat and belly of the dying whale.¹

Truly nature is a savage thing, and the Natural law, of which St. Paul talks, an abomination. Little wonder that the vegetarians and others preach and strive against it, although with as much chance of success as has the tortured lobworm against the jaws of Martha. In the infinite past, in the present, and in the future for so long as time shall endure, the law of the physical universe is a law of death made as terrible as possible to all that breathes by antecedent torment of the frame and the intelligence, for there seems to be no creature so humble that it cannot feel pain and fear. Such being the rule of the Natural law, certainly the promised advent of the Spiritual is needed to redress the balance.

August 8.—Yesterday afternoon we had heavy rain, which set in at twelve o'clock and continued till sunset, but as it was Sunday this interfered with nothing. To-day also it has been raining since early morning—a real old-fashioned wet day, of which we have seen few for the last three or four years. Notwithstanding the weather, we have been hoeing the root on Baker's, which is a work we are most anxious to get on with before harvest.

Towards evening I walked to one of the root-fields, in order to have the pleasure of seeing the much needed rain fall upon it. How the turnips seemed to rejoice in the moisture as it pattered continually upon their green leaves, now flagging no longer, and ran down in shining beads to the neck of the bulbs, then over them to the droughty earth, that sucks up every precious drop of it as greedily as does a sponge parched by the sirocco! One could

¹ Since writing the above passage I have read in a book by Mr. Louis Becke, the chronicler of the Southern Seas, a thrilling account of a fight between a thresher and a whale, which took place off the coast of New South Wales. In this instance the thresher was assisted by two bulldog fish of the whale tribe, called *Orca gladiator*. Perhaps in the battle I saw *Orca gladiator* was at work also—if he frequents the west coast of Africa. Certainly I saw fish leaping out of the water, and falling on to the back of the whale, which looked to me as though they weighed many tons.

almost see their delight—thirsty children new satisfied could not look more glad.

Leaving the field, I walked down the Bungay road, on which thin pools of water glimmered like March ice; till presently I met a man in a cart who was looking for Hood. I asked him what was the matter, and he told me that the foal which was running with its dam—the pony from Bedingham—on the long railway marsh, No. 20, was stretched upon its side dying. Asking my informant to find Hood, I pushed on to the marsh, and there I found the foal—a beautiful little black-pointed and muzzled thing of five months old—not dying, but stone dead. There it lay upon its side, its slender legs stretched out stiffly, its head quite motionless, not asleep, dead, dead—a glance showed it. Over it stood the mare, as still as though she had been cut in stone, her ears sloped back, but not with vice, her under lip projecting, the milk dripping from her distended udder, and in the large eyes and on the patient face a look of woe utter and pathetic. No human mother grieving over her firstborn could have shown sorrow more visibly; yet this creature made no moan, and weep it could not. It knew that its offspring was dead; and to me, watching it, it seemed to be trying to understand what this death meant, and why it caused such suffering.

Perhaps, however, this was fancy; perhaps horses do not know mental pain, and the impression I received was partly due to the surroundings of the scene. Above, the sky sullen and grey, dropping a thin and failing rain; below, the sodden grass, in which water splashed beneath the foot; to the west the struggling and smoky sunset, whereof a red ray lit upon the surface of the long, reed-fringed dyke; and for background a few melancholy willows, round about which stretched the desolate expanse of marsh. Not a soul to be seen, not a sound to be heard save the far-away note of a plover calling towards the common. And there, falling naturally into this sad scheme of colour, a key and answer to the picture as it were, this live animal, with the milk trickling from its udder, standing over the dead, itself as still as the dead. Could it be painted as it was, that scene might serve as a symbol of all loss, all sorrow, and all death. And yet it was made up of a mare standing over a dead foal in a wet pasture—nothing more.

We had great difficulty, by the way, in driving the pony from the body of the foal, to which it broke back continually through the ring of those who were engaged in catching it.

Only once before in my life did I witness a pastoral scene that

left quite so strong a sense of desolation upon my mind. It was in the uplands of Natal, in the year of the Boer rebellion, when a snowstorm, such as had never been known, swept the country, killing thousands of horses and cattle. I was travelling towards the coast, walking with my companions behind the cart so that the mules might find it lighter to drag through the snowdrifts. Presently we saw two waggons, that seemed to have a deserted appearance, standing at a distance from the track, and went to look at them. Never shall I forget what we found! There was a space between the waggons, where their owners had tried to make a shelter for the cattle by tying a tilt from one roof-tent and dissel-boom to the other. It had availed nothing against the icy blast, however, for there in the space lay the oxen dead—a confused and motley coloured heap of them. Or, rather, thirty were dead. One still moved in the heap, and one, the last survivor, stood over them, his great horns swaying to and fro, as little by little the unaccustomed cold froze into his heart. At the back of one of the waggons, staring at the dead cattle and wrapped round with sacks, sat a man and a woman, rude, unwashed Boers. We asked them if the cold had killed the oxen, and the man answered '*Ja*.'

'They were all we had,' added the woman in an unemotional voice. 'Now we are beggars.'

Then we ran on to overtake the cart, but at a little distance I turned back to look, and there was the living ox swaying over its dead companions; there the two Boers staring sullenly at the sight; there the dismal-looking waggons on the vast and lonely veld, lifeless now beneath its winding-sheet of snow; while over all, piercing the grey cloud, a fierce ray from the westering sun fell like some sudden and gigantic sword.

To day I have received by the post two interesting documents. The first of them is a prospectus of Garton's Limited. The work done by Messrs. R. & J. Garton in producing new breeds of cereals, grasses, and clovers is well known among agriculturists. Myself I have never seen any of these corns or grasses, but, if the published accounts are correct, some of them must be remarkable.

In their prospectus Messrs. Garton claim that among the cereals they have created 'are composed a series from which new and valuable food elements can be obtained which it is impossible to obtain from the varieties now generally cultivated.' They do not, however, propose to offer the seed of this series for sale, as all its produce is to be retained by the company when formed for the

manufacturé of 'new and distinct food products for human consumption, for which patent rights will be applied for in due course.' On the feasibility of this scheme it is difficult to express any opinion. It may be remarked, however, that hitherto the existing cereals, wheat, barley, oats, &c., have amply satisfied the wants of man, although this does not prove that tribes of grain possessing still richer qualities cannot be evolved by human skill. This is a question which only the future can decide, and one whereof the development will be watched with great interest by the world, though it may be doubted whether, should Messrs. Garton succeed in their tremendous aim of the creation of a new and superior food-stuff, any patent law would enable them to withhold the advantages of their discovery from the public. For the present, however, most people would be satisfied with the improvement of existing cereals, a task to which their skill seems to have been directed with admirable results. It is to be hoped that the company which they are forming will be as successful in the future as their firm has been individually in the past. Since I gather from the prospectus that the whole of the ordinary shares are to remain in their hands and that they are to continue to manage the venture, this does not seem an extravagant expectation.

The second document is a circular from that admirable society, the Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution, addressed to me as churchwarden of this parish, asking that the whole or part of the Harvest Thanksgiving collection should be devoted to the Society, which since the year 1860 has already distributed over 360,000*l.* among distressed agriculturists and their children. Appended to the circular are a few examples of agricultural misfortune. They are melancholy reading, but, like most people connected with the land, I could supplement them from my own experience by instances equally sad. The distresses of those who in this country try to win a living out of the products of the earth, are a very favourite subject of jest among celebrated after-dinner speakers, and rarely fail to provoke a ready laugh from an audience which has just dined upon American flour, River Plate beef, Australian mutton, Russian fowls, French milk, Dutch margarine, and German beet-sugar. Heaven knows, however, that they are genuine enough, as the Agricultural Benevolent Institution will have no difficulty in proving to any who trouble to inquire into the matter.

August 9.—I forgot to state in my diary yesterday that the foal was supposed to have expired of chill resulting from exposure

to wet and cold on the low railway marsh. This theory struck me as odd; first, because I was told that the little creature had been seen playing round its dam not four hours before its death, and secondly, because it showed no outward and visible sign of having come to its end from any such cause. For these reasons, I directed that a post-mortem examination should be made. This was done by the veterinary this morning, with the result that the animal was proved to have died from the effects of an irritant vegetable poison. The stomach, which I saw, is perfectly scarlet in colour, and spotted here and there with bright purple patches. That the working of this poison must have been very violent and sudden, was proved by the fact that the inflammation does not descend into the passages beyond the stomach, and by the absence of all swelling. The suggestion of the veterinary is that the animal must have eaten the poisonous weed known as water-hemlock, which it seems that foals will devour, although older animals reject it. As the veterinary says that the fee will only be ten shillings, we have agreed that the inflamed organ must be sent to an expert to be scientifically examined. If there is any poisonous herb growing in this marsh, it is desirable that we should know it.

August 10.—The wet weather continues, but we are able to plough and drill headlands with turnip seed. Hood and the veterinary have been searching the railway marsh, and found a poisonous herb growing upon it which is known as fool's parsley, some plants of which seem to have been recently bitten. As no water-hemlock has been discovered—the administration of any drug being out of the question—it is supposed that this fool's parsley did the mischief. The odd thing is, that all last year, and I think during previous seasons, foals were running on this marsh without taking the slightest injury from its herbage. This spring, however, the weather was wet, and it occurs to me as possible that damp favours the production of venomous weeds. At the same time it must be remembered that we have had wet springs before that of 1898.

August 12.—To-day arrived two Southdown rams and thirty-one black-faced ewes, which Mr. Simpson has bought for me at the sale at Bury. The rams are aged, and one of them is rather shaky on his feet, from foot-rot in past seasons I suppose, but I understand that their pedigree is distinguished, and as they only cost forty shillings apiece I cannot complain. The ewes, on the other hand, were bought at fifty-one shillings a head. This is

twelve shillings apiece more than I gave two years ago for my present lot of black-faced ewes, which are very much better bred than these new additions to the flock. The fact is that black-faced Suffolk sheep have recently become more popular, with the result that their price has risen. Large prices are paid for the best of them; thus, I hear that a gentleman in the neighbourhood has just given fifty guineas for a ram of this breed.

To-day we are cutting the All Hallows pease, for it is our first of harvest, and, what is of good augury, very fine. These pease are a poor crop, partly from the coldness of the spring and partly because of the red-weed with which this land is infested. At Bedingham they begin harvest to-morrow. To-day Moore is horse-hoeing the white turnips which are drilled on No. 18, where the fly took off the swedes. Oddly enough, it did not touch the turnips, so there is a very good plant of them.

August 15.—Last Saturday, the 13th, we cut the pease on Baker's, which are a much better crop than those upon All Hallows, probably because this field was manured, part of it, with Bungay compost. Some authorities say, however, that pease do best without the stimulus of manure, but I suppose that this is only when the land is in good heart, which is not the case on Baker's. The weather, on Saturday, Sunday, and to-day, has been lovely, and exceedingly hot. The barleys are now very white and 'dying' rapidly, too much so, I fear, for the good of the sample. The wheat also has turned a rich golden yellow, and is not so much beaten down by the recent rains as might have been expected.

This morning we set the new reaper to work on the glebe fields of oats, Nos. 39 and 40, which this year are bearing a good crop for so scaldy a piece of land, owing doubtless to the wet of the early summer. Before the machine can be put in, a pathway for it must be mown round the field with a scythe. Then the thing starts, drawn by two horses. It is beautiful to see it work, for it cuts wonderfully clean, the arms sweeping the bundles of corn from the platform in sheaves, ready for the binder. By a clever contrivance of the mechanism, which it is impossible to explain here, this act is not always performed by the same arm. The arm that at one revolution delivers the bundle from the table to the ground, at the next merely bends the straw over the knives, while another dips down to the platform and clears it. Thus into these various and complex operations the strength of the horses is transformed and distributed to each of them in such

proportion as is needful. Care, however, must be taken at the corners, where the machine turns, or it will jam; indeed, it is well for a man to round them off with a scythe. Some people yoke three horses to these reapers, but I only use two, which are changed at noon, for half a day's work with a reaper behind them is quite enough for a pair of horses. I believe, by using six horses instead of four, under favourable circumstances, that twelve or thirteen acres can be 'knocked down,' but we are quite satisfied if we get through six or eight in a day's work. By the way, I see in the papers that a terrific accident has happened with one of these machines. A pair of horses attached to it bolted, and in trying to stop them their owner was thrown down and so cut about by the knives that he died.

August 18.—Yesterday we finished mowing the barley on the Ape field, No. 26, and that on the part of No. 23 opposite, which was sown with this grain. I heard from Hood that two parties had expressed a willingness to take Bedingham if they could come to terms. I shall decline the offers with thanks, as, after the expense and labour of bringing the farm into condition, I do not care to run the risk of its ruin at the hands of a yearly tenant. This morning there was a very heavy dew—indeed, as I walked down to bathe in the Waveney, about half-past seven, everything was drenched with it, and the feel of the air was quite autumnal. We have carted all the barley from the Ape field, after it has been but two days cut; which can only be done when no grass-seeds have been sown with the grain to make a hay crop the second year. This used to be an invariable practice with us, but now that I have so much land down to permanent pasture, some of the barley stubbles are broken up for other crops. Thus beans will be drilled upon the Ape field this autumn. I should have added that the reason why the presence of layer prevents an early carting of the barley is that, being green and succulent, it takes a while to dry, whereas the corn itself, which in this respect differs from wheat, and still more from oats, is as a rule practically sapless and dead when it is severed from the ground. A sample of this barley rubbed in the hand looks a little white to my eye; but I hope that it will take more colour after 'sweating' for a few weeks on the stack, or rather in the home barn, where it has been stored.

August 19.—To-day I drove with my agent, Mr. Simpson, round some outlying farms belonging to this property. One of them is being farmed by two maiden ladies of an old-fashioned

type. By old-fashioned I mean nothing disparaging, but that, instead of playing the piano and looking genteel in a silk dress and a sham diamond ring, these ladies bake and brew and cook, employing a managing man to see to the stock and field-work. They are types of a class that is fast vanishing from this county, and whom it is well to study while there is yet time. Moreover, they always seem glad to welcome their landlord when he chances to pass their way, and the land they till is in excellent condition.

The next farm we visited is that where the old gentleman lived who slept every night of his long life in the same room in which he was born, and in which he died. Since his day, however, there has been another tenant here, and one of not a good stamp. He has departed, leaving the land in a very different condition to that in which he took it, and the place has been re-let to the present holder. The house, where his predecessor lived and died—a low, steep-roofed building, rather long for its size—is in fair order, but the state of the farm buildings is—or was—fearful. The old gentleman, who had known them from his childhood, did not care to see them interfered with, and the last man was not a person to be encouraged with repairs, but now these have to be faced. This year about 90*l.* is being spent on the barn, cowshed, and stable, and there remains a good deal more to be done in the future. When finished the buildings will be snug and convenient, being wood-clad with a brick footing; but the rent of the holding is now only 27*l.* 10*s.*, so that when even the present repairs are paid for, no profit will come out of it for more than three years. At this rate, it would take a landlord some time to develop into the plutocrat familiar to the mind of the agitator.

After inspecting these repairs, we went on to a much larger farm—two hundred acres of land—which for some years past has been bringing in the magnificent revenue of 50*l.* a year minus tithe (about 25*l.*) and repairs (a varying quantity). On the pastures of this farm grow some very good oaks, and, remembering a particularly grand tree in a certain meadow, I went to look at it. Presently it came in sight, but although the great bole was there, somehow its appearance seemed to have changed. Then I saw the whole truth. The lower limbs of the tree—great rungs which had been perhaps two or three hundred years in growing—had been mercilessly sawn off. It was ruined. Full of feelings which it would be difficult to express on paper, I proceeded to another part of the farm where stood a second grand oak. To be brief, the same thing had happened—the lower boughs had been sawn off, and

its shape and beauty, which had slowly matured through centuries, were destroyed for ever. Then I am afraid I lost my temper. Calling the head man on the farm—the tenant himself was not there—I spoke my mind to him, and asked why this thing had been done, telling him with truth that however little I might be able to afford it, I would rather have given a year's rent of the farm than see those oaks thus mangled. To all this his only reply was that his master had told him to saw off the limbs; the fact being, I presume, that as in each case the trees threw some shadow on the adjoining arable land, it was thought profitable to thin them by removing the lower boughs, which could be used as firewood. I know another instance of the same thing, where, on an estate belonging to a relation, the lower branches of a whole line of oaks which stand by a footpath were removed by the tenant without the owner even being spoken to about the matter. Five-and-twenty years ago such a thing could scarcely have happened, but now the tenant is often master of the situation, and this is one way of showing it.

I must add that since the above was written Mr. Simpson has received a letter from the gentleman concerned in this tree-tragedy. He says that his man tells him that the trees he cut were damaged in a gale last March twelvemonth. It may be so, but in that event it is strange that the wind should only have struck the lower and more sheltered boughs; also that their removal should have been put off for so long, and that the man should not have mentioned these facts, but should have told me that he cut them away by order of his master. However, they are gone, leaving the world poorer by two beautiful oaks, so there is an end of the case. I dare say that if they still stand, in another century or two the upper boughs will have thickened and they will look picturesque again; at any rate, I like to think so.

In driving through this heavy-land country I noticed two things: that the system of cleaning fields by summer fallowing them is more prevalent than with us, and that they use a good many 'maffies.' 'Maffie' is derived from hermaphrodite, and signifies a cart on to which, for the purpose of carting hay or corn, is affixed a contrivance like the fore-part of a waggon, so that in fact it is neither cart nor waggon. Hence the term. In all this stiff-soil district the corn crops seem to be heavy this year.

August 22.—Saturday, the 20th, was a fine, indeed a perfect, harvest day. The men were engaged in cutting the barley on the Thwaite field, No. 28, where there is a fair but not a

heavy crop, with a bottom rather full of layer, as this portion of No. 28 is sown down for clover hay next year. The sight of them, one following the other across the field in a broken line as they cut down the ripe corn with wide sweeps of the scythe, made a fine picture of strenuous and combined effort. The place is pretty, too, with the windmill in the background, and the heat-haze softened the scene, keeping it in tone and making it restful. One of the features of these mowings is the almost invariable presence of a man with a dog—some one in the village who is fond of a bit of sport. As the mowers get to the end of a stretch a rabbit or two will bolt, and be swept up by the dog before it can win the shelter of the hedge. The rabbits thus obtained are, I believe, divided among all concerned, upon some fixed system, but what it is I do not know.

Here is a story of a gentleman who knows about everything in the world except the art and practice of agriculture, who accompanied me to Bedingham yesterday. Scene: a beet field, and by the gate a patch of tiny white turnips recently drilled upon the site of the last year's root-clamp, or 'hale,' where swedes had been stored and earthed over.

'Why are these so much smaller than those?' asked my friend, pointing first to the patch of little turnips and next to the tall beet in contact with and surrounding them.

'Because of the hale,' I answered.

'Indeed!' he said, 'that is *most* interesting. Do you know, I had no idea that hailstorms were ever so strictly local and so limited in their destructive effect. Look, the line might have been cut with a knife.'

After all, although we laughed at it, his mistake was natural, for 'hale' and 'hail' are pronounced the same, and he had never heard the former term, which is, I think, peculiar to these parts.

Coming home through the orchard from church about eight o'clock last evening, I stayed a while in the Buildings stackyard, to watch a great white owl hawking silently in the twilight. By day and by night life seems to be a very solemn thing to an owl; but perhaps—who knows?—he is really a merry bird. Presently, grey and ghostlike, he glided close to my head, for in the shadow of the tall pale gate I think I was invisible to him. Then he turned, and rising to clear the haystack, saw, I suppose, a mouse running about upon it. At any rate he swooped, striking the roof of the stack with a heavy bump. But the mouse had been too

quick for him, so, recovering himself, the owl departed in disgust, and a minute later I heard his melancholy note far away across the lawn.

This morning the machine was cutting wheat on the top portion of the pit-hole field, No. 23. Here the sparrows have done great damage; indeed quite enough grain for a seeding is lying on the land, picked from the ears and cast away by these mischievous little wretches. In this field there was a mighty rabbit hunt, for at the end of it is the little Hollow Hill plantation, also the old sand pit in its midst is a great harbour for them. Several men and dogs appeared upon the scene, and as the area of standing corn was narrowed to a little patch, the rabbits began to bolt from it freely. To and fro ran the men shouting, while the scared creatures, after various vain efforts to hide themselves, made a wild attempt to escape, the cur dogs leaping high into the air to try to catch a glimpse of them as they scuttled through the fallen corn. With many turns and doubles they coursed the poor bunnies, uttering short sharp yaps of excitement, and, gripping them with their white teeth, shook and bit them till they were dead. In all about a score of rabbits were killed, but quite as many more gained the shelter of the hedges and plantation.

In the afternoon the machine was moved to the All Hallows wheat, No. 32. In half of this field the corn is badly laid by the recent wind and rain storms, while in the other half it stands quite upright and unharmed. The laid half, through which the thistles and divers rubbish are growing freely, was, I remember, drilled a fortnight before the upright half. Last year this laid portion produced a crop of vetches, and, as vetches are supposed to exhaust the land, received a good dressing of farmyard manure; while the rest, which was under beans, among the stubble of which some mustard had been sown, was only folded over with sheep. The results seem to suggest that it is a mistake to manure wheat land too heavily, as it makes the straw rank and liable to go down under wind and rain; also that vetches are not after all a very exhausting crop.

The weather to-day has been very sultry, and heavy rain must have fallen within a few miles of us, as a thunderstorm growled and muttered past in the direction of Loddon, but left us untouched.

A friend with whom I was talking this afternoon about the poverty of those who follow the profession of agriculture, pointed out that here and there are people who seem to thrive on it.

This indeed is the case, for in this district I know of two men who a short time ago had little or nothing, and now are farming hundreds of acres of land. How, under the present circumstances of agriculture, they have managed to get their capital together is a mystery to me. I can only suppose that it has been done by shrewd and successful dealing, or possibly such men may be the representatives of others who are willing to entrust them with money. Otherwise the gulf between a farm employing two horses and one of a thousand acres seems too wide for the most intelligent person to span in the course of a few years in these days of unprofitable prices.

August 23.—To-day the men have been tying up wheat, which is left by the reaper in bundles ready to their hands, and carting pease from No. 37 into the All Hallows stackyard. First the pease, now brown and withered, are raked into lines, where they lay in lumps as they left the scythe, with sufficient space between the lines for a waggon to travel. Then they are loaded on to the waggon, a lump being lifted at each forkful. While they were being carted I had an opportunity of watching a botfly, or horse-bee, at work. The insect buzzes about the horse, and continually touches it on such portions of its frame as lie within reach of the animal's tongue, for the most part on the inner side of the knees and upon the shoulders. At each touch of its tail there appears a little white egg, which is securely gummed to the extremity of one of the hairs of the coat. How is the hair selected so surely and swiftly, and how is the egg thus fixed to it without fail? This egg, the horse when licking himself transfers first to his mouth and thence to his stomach, where it affixes itself to the coats of the membrane, and in due course becomes a bot. In the following spring the bot, having completed its unsavoury development, and being now a maggoty and unpleasant looking object, passes from the stomach to the earth, where it lies until it is transformed into a fly exactly resembling that which buzzed around the horse last autumn. I succeeded in catching this particular fly, after I had seen it lay an enormous number of eggs. It is an insect greatly resembling a bee, with an arched tail, or egg-depositor, and very large and transparent eyes. Hood assured me that they live in nests like ordinary bees, but on this point I think that, for once in his life, Hood is mistaken.

To-day I received the report of the analyst on the stomach of the foal which was sent to him to examine. It is a negative document, for he can tell us nothing of the cause of death beyond

that it was probably brought about by a violent vegetable poison, of which we were already convinced. What is not negative is his bill, which, instead of the ten shillings that I understood I should have to pay, amounts to three guineas. This sum, however, he has reduced to two guineas on the urgent representation of the veterinary, who forwarded him the organ to be examined. I dare say that the charge is fair and reasonable enough, although the investigations of the analyst leave us none the wiser. I wish to point out, however, that such fees are beyond the means of the farmer. The value of such a foal as I lost, when alive, may have been four guineas, and half that sum is too much to pay for abortive post-mortem researches on its stomach. If the Board of Agriculture, or the County Councils, could provide laboratories, where such inquiries might be carried out at really cheap rates, it would be a great boon to farmers.¹

This evening the air was very close, and the gnats were extraordinarily active. Indeed, the sound of their humming reminded me much of that of the mosquitoes on some of the tropical rivers in Mexico or in the African fever districts. If watched, these gnats may be observed to form a pillar over a man's head, above which they rise and descend as the fancy takes them, or in accordance with aims and arrangements which we do not understand. It is, I think, this rise and fall of their multitudes that produces such very curious variations in the noise of the humming, which now sounds quite loud and angry, and now seems faint and far away.

H. RIDER HAGGARD.

¹ I find, what I did not know at the time I wrote the above passage, that the Royal Agricultural Society, to which I belong, will undertake such investigations for its members at very reasonable rates. The cost of examination of viscera for all vegetable poisons is 1*l.*, and the highest charge in the scale for more complicated operations is 2*l.* Charges for various other services, such as the treatment of sick animals, the inquiry into outbreaks of disease among stock, or the reporting on the purity of samples of seeds, &c., seem to be on the same moderate scale. It is a pity that so few farmers know where they can find such advantages.

(To be continued.)

The Birds' Matins—May.

A Missel Thrush.

We are here !

Another.

Yes, you dear !

Both.

Our reverences making,
Joyful wings we now are shaking,
We have dipped them in the lake,
And we greet the day awake !

Small bird on twig. Here are bread-crumbs strewn in plenty !

One in tree.

'Then come kiss me sweet and twenty !'

The other.

There's no time for such beguiling,
For the day's not long for smiling.

Various voices.

We must hurry !

We must scurry !

Here's the cat that they call Pucky !

That no other 'tis we're lucky !

He could charm ye,

But won't harm ye,

It's the cat that they call Pucky !

See, he crouches as for springing !

Then our way we'd best be winging,

Though he may not long to snatch us,

Yet his nature is to catch us,

So our way we'd best be winging

To rehearse our noontide singing !

We can cherish no resentment,

We will chirp and trill contentment ;

We must never dream of scorning

This provision for the morning !

WALTER HERRIES POLLOCK.

Firearms and Armour.

THAT firearms sealed the fate of armour centuries ago is one of the tritest of historical generalisations. When some new scheme for its revival is brought forward we all know too much to be more than amused. Nothing, we say, can be more dead, more decayed beyond the possibility of resurrection, than defensive armour, and we laugh at the sanguine inventor for his pains. One hardly has the face to suggest that perhaps the circumstances under which armour went out of use are much misconceived, and demand reconsideration. Still those who have any acquaintance with historical generalisations are commonly inclined to regard them with suspicion. Such things have an insidious way, as they roll along, of increasing their bulk till they bear but little resemblance to the form in which they started. Hallam did his best for this one to check its career of deformity. In his *Middle Ages* he plainly expresses his doubts whether firearms had much to do with the matter; but the idea survived his suspicion, and has succeeded in establishing itself in so secure a respectability that no one thinks of asking for its credentials. You cannot go two steps into the subject without falling on something of this kind: 'With the first killing discharge the doom of feudalism had gone forth. Plate armour no longer availed against the weapon of the peasant, and the mailed chivalry, the sinews of previous battles, who had trampled with their iron heels upon popular rights, no longer could carry all before them. The people discovered the power of contending against the *noblesse*. By degrees they rose for liberty and suppressed the tyranny of the petty lords.'

The passage is taken, as the first that came to hand, from a deservedly popular encyclopædia, and serves as well as another for the ingenuity with which it has condensed into small compass all the popular confusions and fallacies on the subject. We may pass over the common error of using mail and plate as synonymous terms, and of regarding men-at-arms rather than infantry as the

'sinews of previous battles;' nor need we spend time upon the fine flight about the 'weapon of the peasant.' Firearms were, of course, far too expensive for a peasant to possess; the harquebus required high training for its successful handling, and was tactically useless without well-drilled pikemen to cover it. If it did anything, it was to place new power in the hands of the *noblesse*. With a small body of harquebusiers a tyrannous lord could terrorise over districts where formerly the peasants with their bills and pikes might have been more than a match for his men-at-arms; and the invention of firearms can have had no direct influence upon the fall of feudalism, except by virtue of the increased power it enabled a wealthy central government to bring to bear upon its feudatories. The alleged secondary effect of the invention of gunpowder, however, does not at present concern us. What we have to examine is rather the initial assertion that plate armour no longer availed against the weapon of the peasant, or, in other words, that armour, and with it feudalism, went out because it did not afford protection against firearms.

Let us see first what the old military writers who touch the subject have to say; for most of them—and that is significant enough—say nothing about it at all. To begin with, there is that redoubtable pedant Sir James Turner, who taught Sir Walter Scott to love old military lore. His service extended over the last period of the decay of armour, and his *Pallas Armata* was published in 1683, when it had almost gone out of use. This, no less than the number and variety of flags under which he had served, makes him an authority of great weight; and here is what he says in his third book: 'Why the same care is not taken now to defend men's bodies in the time of fight as well and as much as of old there was, since the offensive weapon of later times, by the help of fire, pierces more deeply and more deadly than any of the former ages did before gunpowder, I suppose cannot well be told.' He clearly is of opinion that firearms were not the explanation. The reprehensible neglect of commanders is one reason he suggests, and the other 'the long and continued marches of our modern armies,' in all seasons, which marches he nevertheless protests were not so far or so fast as what the Romans were used to achieve in all their panoply; and so, like a good old soldier, he concludes by regarding the phenomenon generally as a piece of the degeneracy of the times. The great Marshal Saxe, who wrote a little later when armour was quite out of fashion, was of much the same opinion. 'I am at a loss,' he laments in his *Reveries upon the*

Art of War, 'why armour has been laid aside; for nothing is either so useful or ornamental: perhaps it may be said that the invention of gunpowder abolished the use of it, but that is far from being the true reason, because it was the fashion in Henry IV.'s reign, and since to the year 1667: and everyone knows that powder was introduced amongst us long before that time. I shall endeavour to make it appear, that its disuse was occasioned by nothing but the inconvenience of it.'

When two eye-witnesses so competent confess their uncertainty as to the real root of the matter, we may be sure it is not an easy thing to find, and if we make the attempt it is to have our preconceived ideas startled at the outset by the discovery that plate armour and gunpowder were introduced in the same century. Till the time of our Edward III. the heaviest mounted soldier had been armed with no more than chain-mail reinforced here and there with small steel plates, and gunpowder was in the rawest experimental stage. At the time of his death a regular panoply of plate had become the normal equipment of heavy cavalry; by the end of the century artillery was a recognised siege arm, and had been used in the field.

Nor by following the career of either invention are we brought any nearer to the popular conception. Plate armour was strictly a development of the fourteenth century, firearms of the fifteenth, but the two things continued to develop side by side, neither, it would appear, being in any way influenced by the other. Armour certainly grew heavier and more elaborate, but neither increasing weight nor improved designs bear any discoverable relation to the development of firearms. Defensive armour is generally held to have reached its highest point in weight and complexity in the time of our Richard III., and its period of full development may be said to have lasted till about the middle of the sixteenth century. Certainly no more splendid or elaborate armour had ever been seen than that which was displayed at the Field of the Cloth of Gold and the Battle of Spurs, nor even then can it be said that the decline had begun. 'Since the time,' says Sir James Turner, 'that gunpowder made a loud noise in the world, I do not read of any European army that so nearly resembled the Macedonian phalange, consisting both of horse and foot, as that of Henry II. of France against the Emperor Charles V.' This was the 'Grand Army' of 1552; and the old soldier of fortune goes on to revel in a contemporary description of the magnificence and completeness of its equipment, above all in its thousand men-at-

arms all armed cap-à-pie upon barded horses, and each man of them attended by his full mediæval following of servants, grooms, pages and archers; while, as for the light cavalry, he recalls with approval how even the lightest of them wore 'morions, jacks and sleeves.' Yet by this time the harquebus was a recognised military weapon. Three-quarters of a century previously it had made its successful *début* in the wars of Charles the Bold, and had completed the wreck of his army at Morat. Our Richard III., when he established the Yeomen of the Guard in 1485, had armed them with the new weapon, and since then it had been growing steadily in favour. Of the 42,000 infantry enrolled in the 'Legions' of Francis I. 12,000 carried harquebuses, and so did one-fourth of the 80,000 foot that Charles V. arrayed against the Sultan Solyman before Vienna. Side by side with the magnificent cavalry of Henry II.'s 'Grand Army' marched an equally well-armed infantry, numbering over 30,000, and counting in their ranks so large a proportion as 10,000 'shot.' The mounted 'archers' who followed the 'lances' were all armed with pistols, and amongst his light horse were 15,000 'harquebusiers,' differing but little from the later dragoons and our modern mounted infantry.

So far then it is clear that gunpowder had had no destructive effect upon armour; but with the Grand Army we reach a new point of departure. It proved an unwieldy failure, it never even fought, but is nevertheless noteworthy as a landmark, that fixes for us the extreme limit of the mediæval period, the era of the man-at-arms. From this time armies began to assume a more modern organisation, and the decline of armour undoubtedly set in. Still it was very slow. Passing on another fifty years—to the end of the century—we find it but little changed. A complete picture of what cavalry was at this time has been preserved for us in the beautiful work of Ludovico Melzo, who was lieutenant-general commanding the cavalry of the Spanish army in the Low Countries, and probably the man in all Europe best qualified to speak with authority on the subject.¹ In his time cavalry was of three kinds—Lancers, Cuirassiers, and Mounted Harquebusiers, or, as the French called them, 'Dragoons.' The first two had replaced the old man-at-arms, and were the heavy cavalry of the day. Turner, indeed, identifies the cuirassier with the man-at-arms, but in this it is clear from Melzo he was mis-

¹ *Regole Militari sopra il Governo e Servizio Particolare della Cavalleria*: di Fr. Ludovico Melzo, Cavalier di san Giovanni gerosolimitano, dei consigli secreto di Milano e di guerra ne' Paesi Bassi per S.M. Catholica, suo Tenente-generale della Cavalleria. In Anversa, MDCXI.

taken, as indeed he often was when he slipped into history. Still the change from man-at-arms to lancer and cuirassier was not great. Their horses were no longer barded, but the men were armed almost as heavily as before. Lancers wore 'back' and 'breast' of 'proof' (that is, musket-proof, or at least harquebus-proof), cuishes, tassets, brassets, a close helmet, and gauntlets. And Melzo advises that in every squadron (*compagnia*) thirty of the best mounted and most seasoned men should be armed entirely in proof, to serve as front rank men and receive the first shock of the enemy. The cuirassier was armed in exactly the same way, except that as his function was to support the lancers and penetrate the openings they had made, his 'back' and 'breast' was no more than pistol-proof. Nothing important, it will be seen, had gone except part of the leg armour; cuirassiers and lancers were still but lighter men-at-arms, and this at a time when firearms had advanced so far that the musket with its heavy ball and charge was replacing the harquebus as the infantry weapon.

In the harquebusier, however, is to be found the germ of a change. His only defensive armour was his coat of buff and an open helmet; he was in fact a mounted infantry man, who as often as not fought on foot; his arm was his 'moschetto,' and in him we have at last a recognised type of cavalry that was not armed defensively. It is the invention of this new kind of soldier rather than the invention of any new kind of firearms that marks the next definite step in the decline of armour. Still it was far from doomed. For another half-century the heavy armed trooper continued to exist. Sir Arthur Haslerig at the beginning of our Civil War commanded a regiment of cuirassiers, and the only reason given by contemporary writers for their disappearance in the course of the war is the cost of remounts. In the New Model Army there were none; but Monk, writing at the time from his prison in the Tower, did not regard them as obsolete. 'I have omitted here,' he says, 'to speak anything of the armour of a good cuirassier because there are not many countries that do afford horses fit for cuirassiers,' but he advises any general who can get them to have two thousand. Even when the lancer and the cuirassier had practically disappeared, ordinary 'horse,' or as we should say, the cavalry of the line, continued to be armed with head-pieces and with 'back' and 'breast' of proof.

In the infantry hardly any change had occurred, and properly equipped pikemen retained their armour until a few years before

the invention of the bayonet put an end to their existence altogether. To the very last the new fashion met with the strongest protests from practical soldiers. Sir James Turner with especial severity condemns the growing disuse of armour by pikemen, on the ground that it renders them useless if cavalry stand and fire 'out of danger of the points of the pikes.' In another place, lamenting the disappearance of the cuirassier, he says: 'Here I must answer an objection, which is this: If the armour for horsemen be not musket-proof, either the bullet pierceth through and beats the iron into the horseman's body which is equally dangerous, or if it be proof it is exceedingly troublesome to both horse and man: but I answer that there hath been and are, at this day, arms made that are proof and of no considerable weight.' Pikemen, he holds, should have 'breasts' carabine-proof, and 'backs' pistol-proof; and he even goes so far as to advocate a return to light armour for musketeers, who since their first introduction—and this is a most important point to be remembered—had never been armed defensively. Even Lord Orrery, writing as late as 1677, would have pikemen compelled to wear armour under severe penalties, and lays it down that pikes sixteen feet and a half in length are long enough. 'For,' says he, 'at sixteen foot and a half distance they of the front rank will keep off or gall the enemy's horse, and few ordinary ammunition pistols do certain execution much further off.' It is therefore abundantly clear that even at the end of the seventeenth century the best authorities regarded even light armour as an adequate protection against small-arm fire.

Seeing then that armour survived the introduction of gunpowder by three hundred years, and musketry fire by some two hundred, we may safely agree with Sir James Turner and Marshal Saxe in believing that firearms were not the main cause of the decay. As in most other similar cases, the forces that brought about the change were varied and complex. First and foremost among them I should place neither of those given by Turner or Saxe, but rather, as I have already suggested, what may be called the invention of light cavalry. It is the disappearance of the man-at-arms, be it remembered, that is the first landmark in the decline of armour, and of all arms he probably had least to fear from infantry fire. He was considered irresistible except to pikes; and nowhere is to be found any contemporary suggestion that firearms caused or even hastened his disappearance. The true reason is undoubtedly that given by Melzo, 'I forbear,' he says

in his preface, 'to speak of men-at-arms, the use of whom it may be said has in our time almost altogether gone out many years since, during which time the art of warfare with Light Cavalry has been carried to such perfection, that formed in squadrons they are able much more expeditiously to perform the same services that formerly with greater slowness and with heavier expense were done by men-at-arms.' There can be no doubt that as the military art, like everything else, began to feel the spirit of the Renaissance, advanced soldiers felt moved to grope after making warfare a science. The shock of men-at-arms, the inflexible mass of pikes, the invention of fantastic stratagems sufficed them no longer. With the study of classical models came the thirst to play the game of war, and to play it with the head rather than the strong arm; and with this more intellectual aspiration arose the demand for troops that could be moved like pieces on a board. It was a craving for rapidity, mobility, elasticity. To the scientific soldier the man-at-arms, with his pretentiousness and impatience of discipline or directed action, must have come to be a bugbear. Powerful he was and continued, but costly, clumsy, and as limited in his range of play as a castle on a chessboard. Upon the field of battle where the ground was firm and free and level he was practically irresistible, but very little discrimination in the choice of a position neutralised him altogether, while for pursuit, raids, or reconnoitring he was entirely unfit. Yet even he lingered on so long that Melzo could not omit him from his work without an apology.

What Melzo meant by light cavalry was, of course, something very different from what the words convey to-day. His light cavalry included the heavy-armed lancer and cuirassier, as well as the unarmed 'archibugiero a cavallo.' It would be therefore, perhaps, a more accurate statement of the case to say that the great cause of the decline of armour was the invention of the dragoon. It was the dragoon who was the father of the new light cavalry as opposed to the old. 'The use of mounted Harquebusiers,' says Melzo, 'was invented by the French in the last Piedmontese war, and by them they were called dragoons. . . . The fruit which was gathered from these troops being known, they began to be raised also in the Spanish army, and when the Duke of Alva passed into Flanders, he took some companies of them with him.' Alva went to Flanders in 1567, and therefore the Piedmontese war to which Melzo refers must be that commenced in 1552, under the orders of Henry II., by Marshal de Brissac, against

Charles V., In this war it was the Duke of Alva who commanded for the Emperor, and here it probably was that he learnt his lesson. In any case the 'dragoon' is known to have existed as early; for 1552 was the year of Henry's 'Grand Army,' and we know that it contained fifteen hundred mounted harquebusiers in jacks, morions, and sleeves, riding good geldings, and armed offensively with swords and three-foot harquebuses.

Here, then, in the middle of the sixteenth century, in the midst of an army that still displayed in its panoply all the splendour of the middle ages, we can fix the birth of modern light cavalry. For whether or not the dragoon was intended in his origin to fight chiefly on foot, and to use his horse primarily as a means of rapid transit, he quickly became a cavalry soldier. Melzo describes his mounted duties as of quite equal importance with those he was expected to perform on foot. It was he who was the eyes and ears of the army, who provided it with necessities, who raided the enemy's quarters and communications, and was thrown far forward to seize passes and bridges, and to form the preliminary investment of places marked down for siege. In short, if it be but remembered that the light cavalry charge, as we understand it, was not yet invented, he may be taken as identical with the trooper of our latest model. For not long after his introduction, he was stripped of all defensive armour except his open helmet; and, thus equipped, like a dragoon of to-day, so universally useful, so cheap and efficient a tool did he prove himself in the hands of the new school of tacticians, that he began from the day of his birth to supplant the older forms of horse; and, considering the strength of chivalrous tradition by which they were protected, to supplant them with extraordinary rapidity. By Melzo's time not only, as we have seen, had the man-at-arms quite passed away, but, even as he wrote, the lancer was growing obsolete. In Holland the lance was forbidden in 1599, and in the Spanish service it was retained by the Archduke Albert and Spinola no longer than till 1612. Old-fashioned soldiers lamented its disappearance. Turner, Saxe, and many others, would have revived its use; but never is any reason given for the disappearance of the lancer, except that almost all he was good for could be done more cheaply, quickly, and efficiently by lighter troops. For the same reason the man-at-arms had been superseded, and for the same reason the cuirassier speedily followed them into extinction. It seems to have been found that, by a return to his original armament, the harquebusier could hold his

own without support from heavier cavalry, and that, at a comparatively small cost for mount and arms, and with a greatly increased facility of getting recruits of the necessary physique, he could do all that the new tactics required of cavalry. Armed with 'breast,' 'back,' and helmet, and furnished with a carbine instead of his *harquebus*, he became the 'horse' of the Thirty Years' War, and soon after the outbreak of our Civil War was practically the only form of horse necessary in the eyes of the rising generation of professional soldiers.

But meanwhile his original purpose had been forgotten. By what seems an inevitable law, the attempt to mount an infantry soldier had resulted in the development of a new kind of trooper. So completely had he become a horse-soldier that, as the want of a mounted infantry again made itself felt during the Thirty Years' War, the dragoon had to be practically re-invented, and the same process of development began over again. Cavalry was once more divided into horse and dragoons; with the re-introduction of the charge boot to boot and point advanced the last traces of the trooper's infantry origin disappeared; his arm became once more the sword, and he no longer relied chiefly upon his fire. The carbine gave way to the pistol, and, as the old tactical value of horse was rediscovered, his secondary duties were left more and more to the dragoon. As a natural result, the dragoon tended as before to become a light cavalry man, without defensive armour, and from his mobility, hardiness, and cheapness, to grow in favour at the expense of his heavier comrade. In our own day we have seen the cycle again completed, and a new one commenced. The three regiments which form the Household Cavalry are all the '*harquebusiers*,' or true 'horse,' that have survived in England, and they have been retained for reasons other than military. Nearly all the rest of our cavalry are by descent dragoons; but for long they have ceased to perform their original functions, and now that, for the third time, the inevitable military need has made itself felt, we are trying to meet it not only by the old process of forming mounted infantry, but also by a new one of training our transformed dragoons to resume their lost functions.

The real explanation, then, of the disappearance of armour is, firstly, that with the development of military science, light cavalry proved itself more serviceable than heavier cavalry, and secondly, that light cavalry in their origin were mounted musketeers, and were therefore unarmed. Except in their very early days musketeers,

it must be remembered, never wore armour. 'The defensive arms of a musketeer,' says General Monk, 'is a good courage.' Once having got your unarmed man on horseback, the secret was discovered; and heavy cavalry, or in other words armour, was doomed. In this way, and in no other, can the invention of gunpowder or firearms be said to have had any appreciable effect upon the decline of armour.

Other causes there were no doubt; and one constantly advanced at the time as a reason for giving up armour was that, if a ball did pierce back or breast, it was apt to carry with it broken fragments of metal, that doubled the danger of the wound. But serious soldiers could hardly consider this argument with patience. We have seen how Turner condemns it, and Marshal Saxe is equally convinced. 'Even if it were so,' he protests, 'what will signify the loss of small numbers thus occasioned by their armour, provided that in general it gives us superiority over our enemies and wins our battles? If therefore it be considered how many men lose their lives in an engagement by the sword, and how many are dangerously wounded by random or weak shots, against all which this kind of armour [that is, some of his own invention] will be a protection, one cannot avoid the acknowledging the utility of it.' 'Nothing,' he concluded, 'but indolence and effeminacy could have occasioned its being laid aside.' Everyone must please himself how far to accept the Marshal's dictum. To some it will savour too much of the veteran's perennial grumble over the degeneracy of the rising generation of soldier.

A far more potent influence was the growth of a sentiment entirely opposed to that which the old officers lament. For it is certain that with the decline of armour, it became the fashion to regard it as cowardly, and especially with the gilded youth. In the minds of reckless and high-spirited young gentlemen its weight and inconvenience no doubt would go far to foster such an affectation; nevertheless, it seems impossible to deny that a kind of contempt for its protection was the root of the matter. At what time this devil-may-care sentiment first arose upon the Continent, I cannot say. In France, Louis XIV. found it necessary to be constantly issuing ordinances against the practice of going into action unarmed; but in our own islands it would appear to have begun when, upon the other side of the Channel, armour had barely entered its decline. Conspicuous amongst the iron-clad warriors of Henry II.'s Grand Army was a body

of four hundred Englishmen, all gentlemen volunteers, 'on handsome geldings with little armour for defence.' Their weapons were swords and lances, 'like half-pikes.' A contemporary Italian writer, in describing the heavy lancer of his time, notes with a lurking admiration the exceptional equipment of English and Scottish lancers, who, he says, had little or no defensive armour beyond a doublet with iron quilted into it, and who carried short and light lances with broad butts, which they rested on their thigh or saddle, and rode in with a straight arm—trusting clearly to horsemanship and activity for their effect, and feeling, no doubt, a thoroughly insular contempt for men who feared to increase their offensive power at the expense of a little of their invulnerability. The death of Sir Philip Sidney must have given a great impetus to the craze. Everyone knows how the idol of the English youth crowned his reputation by flinging himself into the mad *mêlée* at Zutphen without his thigh-pieces, and so came by his end. Sir Richard Hawkins, whose heroism was of a less flashy kind, laments that by no means can English sailors be got to wear armour, whereby they are placed at a disadvantage with the Spaniards in close engagements. 'For prevention of the error,' says he, 'although I had great preparation of armours as well of prooffe as of light corselets, yet not a man would use them, but esteemed a pot of wine a better defence than an armour of prooffe.'

Still others who should have known better were equally to blame, and it is certain that in Elizabeth's time really distinguished soldiers set a very bad example. In 1589 Sir Edward Norreys led the assault on El Burgo Bridge in doublet and hose. Sir John Wingfield did the like at Cadiz in 1596 and got killed for his pains, to the deep grief of the whole force. The following year, at Fayal, Raleigh insisted on two occasions upon making a dangerous reconnaissance in person without his armour, and his admirer, Sir Ferdinand Gorges, roundly condemned it as 'but an idle and unserviceable bravery,' and laments the constant occurrence of such foolhardiness even among chief commanders. The same spirit continued unchecked into Stuart times, and General Monk, in his gravely humorous way, lectures his young offenders on their absurd and unsoldierlike views. 'And whereas,' says he, 'the defensive arms of Horsemen and Pikemen are much slighted by some in these times, I would have such know that souldiers ought to go into the Field to conquer, and not to be killed; and I would have our young gallants to take notice that men wear

not armour because they fear danger, but because they would not fear it.'

Lord Orrery, his successor at the Horse Guards, finds it needful to repeat the reprimand, and he sharply scolds 'our young gallants who boast that in their doublets they will charge as far as any in their armour.' 'This,' he adds sarcastically, 'may spring as much from laziness as courage.' In this he was possibly doing them a wrong. At any rate, we have the indisputable story of a famous Parliamentary officer above all suspicion of laziness, who, having resolved to lead an escalade in person, began the operation by quietly taking off his armour. The diverting scene in Mr. Gilbert's opera, where the Princess's brothers, as a preliminary to mortal combat, disarm themselves, piece by piece, strikes us now as entirely ludicrous, as a master-stroke of the author's peculiar humour; but the truth is, that precedents of sober earnest probably have occurred times without number, and what we all laughed at for extravagant farce was, after all, but sober history, or, at least, taken allegorically, contains the marrow of the tendencies which, in the end, drove armour to seek asylum in our museums.

JULIAN CORBETT.

David Peck's Love Affair.

HE had been married ten years, and had had eight children, when his love affair, which caused so much interest in Dulditch, began.

It began by his going home late one night, leaving the under-keeper to watch the brooding hens in the Long-meadow plantation where the pheasants were reared, calling in at the White Hart on his way, and carrying a drop too much from there. He had had a sunstroke at an early period of his career, his head was still a trouble to him at times, and the drop too much was always a matter for which he had to suffer. Worse than that, his wife, more rarely his children, had to suffer too.

And it happened that that night, when he reached home an hour before midnight, he found no supper left out for him.

He called his wife's name angrily up the stairs; but if Mrs. Peck was not too sound asleep to hear, she certainly pretended to be. So up David went, stumbling a little in his heavy boots on the uncarpeted stairs, and muttering to himself. A small shadeless lamp was burning on a chair beside the bed, and by its light he looked upon his wife's face.

'Matilda,' he said, with tipsy dignity, 'where's my supper?'

Even when he put his hand upon the woman's shoulder and shook her, repeating the question, there came no answer, only the flicker of Matilda's lashes upon her cheek.

The husband swore an oath at this, and called his wife an ugly name.

'If I'm to have no supper, that should be the master in my own house, I'm blamed if you shall lay here and snore,' he said.

With that, and without more ado, he pulled her out of bed, and she, not trying to save herself in any way, and still feigning slumber, fell heavily upon the floor.

He left her there, and went to get his own supper ready; and when he came back to bed she was gone.

She had got into bed with some of the kids in the next room, he told himself, and vowed, with a tipsy pride in his prowess, that each night she served him that trick he'd punish her after the same fashion.

But Matilda Peck had not taken refuge with her children, creeping into their already crowded bed, as she had done on other similar occasions. She had dressed herself, and wrapped the baby, which slept with her, in an old black shawl over its night-shirt, and had gone, in the burning sense of injury, and the strength of the anger which possessed her, through the night to her mother's cottage.

'I've had enough of blows and blackguarding from a thankless, beer-drinkin' brute,' she said. 'I'll ha' done with havin' a child a year, and bein' at the mercy of that villain. I'll stop along o' you, mother, as you've often arst me, and he can shift for hisself at last.'

The mother was a widow, still carrying on the little farm of fifteen acres in which her husband had died, and where Matilda, her only daughter, had been born. She was a woman filled with restless energy, an anxious, prating, uncomfortable woman, who had led her lazy old husband a stirring life, routing him out of existence and into his grave at last, the neighbours said. She had been no friend of David's even in the days when the young keeper had gone courting Matilda Mash in the long, one-storeyed farmhouse, not much more than a cottage, to which she had now returned. She had sided with the wife in all disputes which had arisen in her married life, and son-in-law and mother-in-law never met without a quarrel.

On the afternoon of the day following that on which she left him, David Peck, taking easily in his long stride the little barred gate of the garden, appeared before the locked door of the Pound Farm, and in loud tones, banging upon the door with his stick, demanded his wife.

It was early summer time, and the lattice windows of the kitchen, through which Mrs. Peck looked forth upon her husband, were wreathed in long branches of the pale monthly rose. The rose had bloomed in a like luxuriant way, framing her face, when, a girl, she had looked out upon the same handsome figure awaiting her there. She took one hurried glance now, and shrank away to the shady corner of the room, nervously patting with her work-worn hand the back of the baby boy who hung over her shoulder.

'He's here, mother. Here's David,' she said, breathlessly whispering.

'Kape your mouth shut, and kape out o' his way,' commanded the mother.

Receiving no answer to his attack upon the door, David moved to the window. Such a strong, big figure, blocking out the sunshine! How many a time in the old days Matilda had talked to him there as she moved about her work, laughing into the sun-burned face looking in upon her as it was looking now.

'Mother, I ha' come for my wife,' he said.

To this neither woman made reply. The baby, hanging over Matilda's shoulder, jumped a little on her arm, and crowed delightedly at the sound of the father's voice.

David held up a finger to his wife: 'You come along o' me; and bring our boy along o' you, or I'll break every bone in your skin, my woman,' he said; and she not responding to this gentle invitation, he picked up a stone from the loose soil at his feet, and, standing a few paces off, flung it at the window.

At the sound of the shivering glass and the angry cry from old Mrs. Mash, two policemen, lying in ambush there, walked out from the elder bushes at the end of the little garden and took their friend and comrade, David Peck, into custody.

Because of his good looks, his honesty, and other good qualities which, spite of little surface failings already indicated, he possessed, David was something of a favourite with the better classes. Several locally influential people came forward and said a good word for the man before the magistrates; so that, in spite of Matilda's bruises to which the doctor testified, in spite of, or perhaps because of, the animus of Mrs. Mash, the keeper was not sent to prison, only bound over to maintain the peace and dismissed without a fine. But Mrs. Peck duly obtained the separation for which she asked, the custody, besides, of the five youngest children and maintenance for them; to the father being committed the charge of the other three.

So Matilda was driven home triumphantly in her mother's donkey cart, her baby in her arms, through the little town where the magistrates held their meetings. David, being treated to drink by various sympathisers in the hotel bar near the police court, made a rush through his companions to see her pass. He lifted his stick high as a signal to the ladies in the donkey cart to stop.

'You shall pay for this—both of you,' he called after them.

Mrs. Mash shook an angry fist at him, belaboured the ass, and passed on.

'I shall go in peril of my life,' Mrs. Peck said to her mother.

Perhaps she, who knew her husband well, was not so timid as she seemed; but the mother, who firmly believed her son-in-law would not stop short of murder, would never afterwards allow Matilda to go beyond the precincts of the Pound Farm alone.

This watch set upon her goings and comings, the young woman in process of time found irksome, appreciative as she must have been of the blessings of a mother's care and protection. When congratulated on the increased comfort of her position she would remind the neighbours that there were always trials wherever you was, and if they weren't of one sort they was of another.

'Young and old didn't always agree,' she would add. The little uns always seemed to be in their gran'mother's way, and the old lady didn't never seem to think as the po'r little boys and girls couldn't ever do right. She never failed, however, to finish up with the remark that she was thankful to be out o' David's clutches, for no one couldn't never say how much she'd had to put up with wi' the man, and she, for her part, weren't a goin' to tell. She made no specific charges against him, indeed, and was always decently reserved on the subject of his short-comings, having a by no means cruel tongue and a temper still unspoilt by ill usage.

It was otherwise with David. Being released from his wife, it seemed that nothing was too bad for him to say of her. She had mismanaged his house, spoilt his children, wasted his money. 'Twas her love of a pint that had first urged him on to drink. But for her going in bodily fear of his vengeance she would have been unfaithful. She was a lying, idle, worthless slut.

Such wild statements he made for all Dulditch, standing agape, and much enjoying the situation, to hear. He had never been so happy and free since his wedding-day as now, he declared. He blessed the day when the Lord had put him in mind to turn the old woman out of bed. He had forbidden the children under his care to go near their mother, and boasted that he had beaten the eldest boy for disobeying orders.

But the children could have told a different tale. They knew their father did not sleep of nights, but wandered about the house, going restlessly from room to room, as if seeking something he never found. They knew that as soon as the early dawn came, and before his duty called him, he went eagerly forth as if escap-

ing from a spot he had come to loathe. What they did not know was, that instead of going at once to the young pheasants' hatching off in the Long-meadow, to look for eggs in hedge-row and plantation, or to watch for poachers on the confines of the 'shoot,' he walked a mile and a half out of his way to pass the Pound Farm; that arrived there he did not pass it, but hid among the elder bushes and laburnum trees, in full flower now, to watch a certain window which had been his wife's room as a girl.

Once, as the weeks passed on, he stole out from that odorous shelter, and threw a tiny pebble at the window, and softly called her name.

The birds were singing in mighty tumult that morning, every bush was alive with them; in the ivy that covered one end of the house were as many noisy sparrows as leaves. His voice was drowned in the shrill concert, or it refused to obey his will. He had no voice, nor heart, nor hardly any care for life, for missing that which the room, whose window he watched, held.

'Matilda,' he whispered, 'come and speak to me. Say a word to me. Give me one look. You know me, my old woman; you know I would not hurt you.'

But for all the hunger of his heart, and the yearning in his eyes, and the hoarse appeal of his voice, no one came to the window. The birds sang in the full dawn, and he turned heavily about him and went on his way.

But a man who does not eat, and cannot sleep, and who has lost his interest in the pheasant hatching, and could not be roused to anxiety when the rain, lasting two nights and a day, threatened to swamp the young partridges, is in a bad way. At the White Hart it began to be noticed that David's eyes were very wild, although he was quieter in his talk; and the women at the Pound Farm were warned by neighbours, always ready to do anyone a turn, that David had a wou'nerful desprit look and that probably murder would be done.

David's employer, running down from London to see how the young birds prospered, was shocked to remark the change in his handsome keeper's face, and how loosely the smart velvet coat hung on the man's broad shoulders. Something this gentleman learnt of the story—that Peck and his wife had had a disagreement and that she had left him—and, that being so, was inclined to think the trouble, whatever it had been, over. He made his keeper a present of a five-pound note and said a word of encouragement as to the better times in store.

‘Husbans have a deal to put up with, sir,’ Peck volunteered, solemnly and with dignity. ‘You, being a gentleman of the world, doubtless knows that conclusion, sir; but what my own troubles are is known to none but me.’

Thanks to his employer’s generosity, he looked in oftener at the White Hart, and his head became chronically bad. One night the little boy who slept with him was wakened by his father’s moans of pain.

‘Get up and into your clothes,’ David said to his son. ‘Run off, hard as you can go, to your mother. Says you to her, “Father’s a-dyin’, come and see him, mother, afore he die.” Tell her she and me have been sweethearts since we was boy and girl at school, and I call on her now to come and see me die.’

The child’s little feet flew over the mile and a half of meadow-way and lane that made the short cut to Mrs. Mash’s farm. It was the hour before the darkness is overthrown by the dawn, and he was frightened of gipsies, of horned cattle, of hobgoblins. Arrived at the farmhouse door, he could only sob forth that he was afeared, that his father was a-dying, that he wanted his mother.

But Mrs. Mash knew that her son-in-law had spent the last evening at the public house.

‘He’s drunk, the brute!’ was all she said; and Matilda, carrying her boy to the warmth and the comfort of her own bed, vowed that he should go back no more to such an unnatural father—a man who could send such a little, timid boy for such a distance at such an hour of the night.

But, when her own mother had gone back to bed, Mrs. Peck questioned her boy; and at the tale he told of this new strange father, who never laughed or played with Willy, or cared to hear him read out of his school books, or say his pieces to him any more; who never took his son to help feed the young pheasants or to hunt up eggs, who ate no dinner, but who sat at the meal with his head bowed upon the table, and sometimes cried like quite a little child, Matilda grew very thoughtful and still. Before her mother was astir in the morning, she had been to the nearest town for the doctor and sent him on to her husband.

The doctor found Mrs. Peck waylaying him as he left the keeper’s cottage.

‘Drink!’ he said significantly. ‘He has been drinking heavily. He knows what he has to expect if he does it.’

He had barely slackened his horse’s speed as he passed her,

'Don't let him drink, sir,' she called after him. 'Frighten him! Don't let him drink.'

And when it was told to David that his wife had besought the doctor to save him from drink, he took an oath to be kept to his dying day, that not a drop of alcohol should again pass his lips.

'My life is a dog's life,' he said to the doctor. 'I ha'n't no wish to prolong my days, but she wished it—she have alwayst wished me for to take the pledge, and now I done it.'

'The fact of it is, Mrs. Peck, that poor soft-headed husband of yours is dying for love of you,' the doctor told Matilda, going out of his way to call at the Pound Farm one day. 'Life isn't long enough to bear malice. You'll have to forgive him.'

'Never!' cried Mrs. Mash, shaking an excited fist in the doctor's face. 'You seen her bruises, sir; you know the hard time she have with her babies——'

'I think I'm best as I am, sir,' Matilda said quietly; and regretfully the doctor acquiesced.

'To be frank with you, I think you are,' he said; 'but there is David to think of as well as yourself.'

And of David she thought a good deal as she moved about, her child in her arms, in the low-ceilinged, red-bricked kitchen where David had 'come a-courtin'' in years gone by. She was an industrious woman and a good mother; she would work till late at night, washing, ironing, mending, in order that her children might go spick and span to school in the morning. But although she spent herself willingly for them, it was of David she thought. Not so much, in these days, of the David who was the father of those chubby ones, with his eyes and a promise of his strong limbs, but of the young under-keeper of long ago, with one of her own pink rose-buds pulled through his button-hole, who, divining her goings and her comings, had waylaid her by this meadow path and that; who had talked with her over hedges and across gates, hindering her sadly as she went about her appointed tasks; who had lurked among the elder bushes in the summer evenings, waiting the hour when she could elude her mother's watchfulness and steal forth.

One night she awoke with the moonlight strong upon her face, her heart beating wildly in her breast, and the sound of her name whispered, in her husband's voice, in her ear. She sprang from her bed and went to the window. The man she had believed to be upon his sick bed was standing in the moonlight-flooded garden

looking up at her. She softly opened the window, and he threw up his arms and called her name.

'For shame, David! Go along home,' she said, trembling, and much moved. She leant out of the window in her night-gown, and whispered the words lest her mother in the next room should hear. 'You'll get your death, for certain, in these here night dews. Get along home with you, do, David.'

'I'm so lonesome,' he sighed. 'So lonesome, Matilda.' Then the hands he had held out to her dropped upon his face, his shoulders heaved once, twice, slowly, and she knew that he was crying.

She thought she heard her mother stirring in the next room, and she softly closed the window and crept back to bed, where she gathered her baby into her arms, and lay till morning, noiselessly weeping, his warm brown head upon her breast.

The man took cold from that midnight escapade and had a relapse.

It was a bleached and shrunken David Peck who, a few weeks later, and as the sweet dusk of the summer night fell, made his way to the little farmhouse where the pink monthly roses blew upon the plaster walls, and the pigs grunted a familiar welcome from their home in the straw-yard near by. He threw a light pebble at a certain window, then drew back a few steps, and hid himself in the elder bushes by the gate.

Soon, a woman came warily down the pathway; a woman whose fair hair—the only beauty she had preserved unimpaired from girlhood, although she was still under thirty years of age—was prettily ruffled beneath the black handkerchief she had tied over her head; whose face looked lined, and worn, and anxious, but whose mouth could smile tenderly, if not mirthfully, still, and whose eyes were steady and kind.

Without a word he drew her by her toil-worn hand into the deeper gloom of the shrubs.

'Now you've got me, what have you to say for yourself?' she asked him, her lips tremulous, her eyes mocking him, as he held her before him in silence. 'Surely, surely, there's something to be said after all this worritin' of me to come! You never was backward wi' your tongue, nor yet always wi' your fists, come to that,' Mrs. Peck went on, rallying him, his own composure hardly maintained. 'Now I've come o' purpose to hear what you have got to say. You ain't a-going to remain silent for the first time i' your life—surely, surely, sure-ly!'

But not a word now could the ready tongue speak, and the last '*sure-ly*' broke in a little laughing sob, for the man's head lay on her shoulder, and she felt him draw his breath painfully in weeping.

There was silence between them after that, for what could eloquence have done more?

For minutes the soft and scented stillness of the night was unbroken save for the man's sobbing breath as he struggled for self-control, and the tender *hsh—hsh* of the woman's voice. Then the cottage door opened sharply, and a stream of light was thrown, between the tall white phloxes and purple delphiniums of the box-edged borders, upon the garden path. Presently Mrs. Mash, with angry, suspicious voice, called her daughter's name.

The pair in the shade of the elder bushes waited, holding their breaths, till the old woman withdrew, till the delphiniums grew black again in the deepening twilight, and the phloxes showed starlike through the gloom. Then the man lifted his head.

'To-morrer?' he said to his wife, holding her close in arms trembling from recent illness.

And she answered:

'To-morrer.'

And when to-morrow came Matilda excused herself and her children from accompanying her mother and the donkey-cart to the week's shopping in the market-town; at which disappointment of all their hopes and expectations the five lifted up their voices and wept. For was there not the lost delight of the farthing cakes with which to beguile the journey home as they sat, a huddled mass, in the bottom of the cart? Was there not that, now for ever to be missed, screw of sweets purchased with the ha'penny change when granny paid the bill? Was it not a thing of enjoyment to sit safely in the cart and to hear their relative belabouring Teddy overhead? Teddy, who never moved one sturdy leg the faster for all her whacks? To them in their small experience there was not in the world a richer person than grandmother, and it was a proud privilege to see that mighty woman laying in her week's stores with a judgment that never faltered and a princely liberality. Defrauded of the chief pleasure of their days, they howled rebelliously, and were scarcely reconciled to their disappointment by watching the eager bustle of

'mother,' who went about from place to place, collecting all their small belongings.

These, finally, the eldest boy had to drag to his father's house in the go-cart, his smallest but one brother suffocatingly wedged among the bundles, while the mother trudged alongside, her brown-haired baby in her arms, and the rest of her offspring clinging to her skirts.

When grandmother returned with her marketing she found only an empty house and silent rooms. She set her thin lips, with disappointment and bitterness at her heart, as she stalked about the forsaken kitchen getting her solitary tea ready.

'There is no helping a fool!' said grandmother through her tight-closed lips.

MARY E. MANN.

At the Sign of the Ship.

‘CONTRIBUTORS are all, in a manner, fierce,’ said the Ettrick Shepherd. Fierceness is also a mark of the Biographer. Here, for example, is Mr. Beavan, writing on ‘the hateful brothers, the sneering Smiths,’ as Charles Lamb called the authors of the Rejected Addresses. Lamb was consoling Wordsworth, I think, for that parody of *Peter Bell* which came out before the Original, and he thought that James and Horace Smith were the authors of the poem. He was wrong, and, in less frenzied hours, would not have spoken so crossly. As the Biographer of the Smiths, whose parodies I highly esteem, Mr. Beavan has fallen foul of my innocent self, with all the fierceness natural to the Biographer. I have not read his book, or any of his books, but my name on the page caught my eye, as I dallied with the new volumes at Mr. Bain’s.

* * *

Mr. Beavan, before he completes my sacrifice, casts upon me, in Homeric fashion, the salt of his ridicule. If the salt hath lost his savour (from being kept too long and used too often), that is Mr. Beavan’s affair. For example, a trenchant historical parallel is drawn between me and the celebrated Mr. Whiteley. I am styled ‘the Universal Provider of the literary world.’ Really the compliment is overstrained! Assuredly I have never, like Mr. Beavan himself, provided the literary world with literature about the present Gracious Occupant and heirs of the British Crown. No, on ‘Popular Royalty’ I have not written (like Mr. Beavan), nor yet, like Mr. Beavan, on ‘Marlborough House and its Occupants.’ I hope that (saving my fealty to the rightful representative of Kenneth Macduff) I am too loyal a subject to ‘chatter about Royalties.’ Marlborough House and its occupants I leave to the industry of Mr. Beavan, as blazoned on his title page.

* * *

My fault, it seems, is to be of the Scottish people, and yet to possess imagination, which Keats denied to mankind North of Tweed. Keats was angry, perhaps, about *Blackwood's Magazine*, and confounded the public of Scotland with the writers in that serial. Next, possessing imagination, I have misused that glorious gift, and have thereby accused Mr. Horace Smith of 'a gross misstatement of facts.' Also I have dealt in 'the calumniation of a most honourable man, who has been dead for the last fifty years.' All this refers to my account of Mr. Smith's connection with the deplorable Scott-Christie duel of 1821, an account which Mr. Beavan finds 'bewildering.'

* * *

The circumstances, indeed, were complex, and much trouble I had, when writing Mr. Lockhart's life, to unravel the letters and pamphlets, or printed statements, of the persons engaged. What happened (as far as my researches show) was this: On Thursday evening, January 18, 1821, at a very late hour, Mr. John Scott called on Mr. Smith, with regard to his pending duel with Mr. Lockhart. He next, probably on the morning of January 19, printed and distributed a paper in which he told the public that, if Mr. Lockhart would first make certain explanations, or 'avowals,' then Lockhart's second, Mr. Christie, might call on Mr. Smith, who was empowered to arrange what might be proper. Lockhart declined to offer the explanations, but Mr. Christie did call on Mr. Smith. Thereafter Mr. Smith wrote a letter to Mr. Scott, which that gentleman instantly published. In this letter Mr. Smith wrote to Mr. Scott, 'I repeatedly told Mr. Christie that if Mr. Lockhart could make the avowal, I was authorised by you to offer him satisfaction.' Nothing can be more clear. In 1821, Mr. Smith writes to Mr. Scott, who publishes the letter, that, in certain circumstances, he will act as second to Mr. Scott; is 'authorised to offer him' (Mr. Lockhart) 'satisfaction.' But, in 1847 (in *The New Monthly Magazine*, No. 81), Mr. Smith, reviving a business better left alone, contradicted his own published letter of 1821. In this article of 1847, Mr. Smith says that he 'repeatedly and distinctly . . . apprised Mr. Scott that I would not be a party, under any circumstances, to a hostile meeting. . . .' Mr. Smith's written statement of 1847 cannot be reconciled with his written statement of 1821. In the letter of 1821, he will act as second, under certain circumstances, circumstances very improbable. In the article of 1847, he says that he

refused to be a party to a hostile meeting 'under any circumstances.'

* * *

I have not, I think, *imagined* any of this: I wrote with the printed papers of 1821, and with a copied extract of the article of 1847 before me. Mr. Beavan may consult the papers published by Mr. Scott in 1821, and, if I have erred, nobody can be more eager to acknowledge the mistake. As to 'calumniation,' I said, and I think, that 'Mr. Smith is in an awkward predicament.' I observed that, in 1847, Mr. Smith's article might be 'contaminated by illusions of memory;' the events having occurred twenty-six years earlier. 'On the other hand, nobody is likely to let his memory beguile him into the belief that he and his friend cut a very poor figure, if they did not really do so.' I consider it certain that, in 1821, Mr. Smith expressed his readiness to be a second, under given circumstances, because he believed (and justly, as it turned out) that these circumstances would never come into existence. And I conceive that, in 1847, his memory played him false (as any man's memory may), and that he neither remembered exactly what had occurred in 1821, nor estimated the inferences which must necessarily be drawn by any one in possession of all the known documents. This can only be disproved by demonstrating that I 'imagined' Mr. Smith's letter of 1821. In my own opinion, imagination is not my *forte*; but for once I may have been, not so much imaginative, as hallucinated. That can be demonstrated by a reference to Mr. Scott's printed circulars, to which Mr. Beavan does not, I think, say that he has referred. I was obliged to tell all the truth I knew about a matter which tradition has perverted.

* * *

Now observe the improvement in social relations: for that is the moral of it. In 1821, in my grandfather's time, if Mr. Beavan had accused me of 'imagining' things tending towards the calumniation of an honourable gentleman, long dead, it would have been imperatively necessary for me to send a friend to Mr. Beavan. There would have been solemn discussions, protocols would have been printed, we should have met each other on Hampstead Heath. Somebody would, perhaps, have got in a straight one; the other, the recipient, would have expired, and the survivor would have been a miserable man. Our grandfathers, in

fact, could not stand killing each other, which, by dint of using the blundering pistol in place of the adroit small sword, they were always doing, to their eternal regret. This was what really killed duelling: men had not the heart to be homicides. In France, thanks to the small sword, they usually scratch each other, and nobody is a penny the worse. We simply state our little differences, I trust with urbanity, and I leave Mr. Beavan to consult the documents.

* * *

I mentioned 'allegiance to the rightful representative of Kenneth Macduff,' who was murdered in 995. Every one has heard how Finella, in her own castle, showed the monarch a brazen image of a man holding an apple of gold; how the king took up the apple, how this action set free the strings of many cross-bows, and how their bolts pierced the Royal heart. Now his representative, by our old Scots laws, was, at a given date, rightful king. But that representative was murdered by Malcolm III. to secure the throne for his own grandson, the gracious Duncan, favourably known to readers of *Macbeth*. However, the slain man left issue, heirs to his claims, and his representative (according to Celtic Legitimist ideas) is rightful King of Scotland. I offer a golden guinea to any one who, before July 1, sends me the name of the person who (probably) is the said rightful king. If several answer right, the first comer takes the prize. Answers may be sent to me at the Sign of the Ship, 39 Paternoster Row. My selection lies with the Editor of LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE. I do not promise to *publish* the name, because the person is probably not conscious of his greatness, and, certainly, is the last to think of raising his standard in support of a claim now seven hundred years in abeyance.

* * *

The ecclesiastical crisis is at a pretty pass—in New Zealand. Church and State are at open war, but the Church is that of the native Maoris. The position is much like that which occurred in France when miracles insisted on occurring at the tomb of the Abbé Paris, concerning which see David Hume's essay on Miracles. The native priests are much like Druids, that is to say, rather magicians than clergy. They are called *tohungas*. Recently the King's *tohunga*, Ehau, raised from the dead a girl slain by another *tohunga*. His later efforts have been failures. Native opinion is much divided, but *tohungas* still exercise great influence.

* * *

The State has therefore stepped in, and Mr. Seddon, the Premier, has issued a manifesto (*makutu*) against miracles, and against tohungas in general. He means to 'put them down.' *Kanui te mana Rititi Hetana, te ariki tangata Makutu Niu Tirenī.* That speaks for itself! *Mana* (exercise of 'magnetic' influence) is forbidden.

* * *

But the Premier's task is difficult. Here is an example. A very great tohunga, Te Toketoke, lately ruled all mankind at Tauranga. But, against a certain other tohunga his *mana* was powerless, like that of the Greek magician against Plotinus. A certain tohunga of the Ngatipikeao he especially hated, and was heard to express his wish that 'he had an oven large enough to cook' his odious rival. The rival heard of this, and dropped a few observations to the effect that a stop must be put to Te Toketoke. Next morning he (the odious rival) called his folk together, and bade them go to the *Kianga* of Te Toketoke, some miles distant, and 'express their regret for Te Toketoke's demise, and their regard for his memory.' They went off in much amazement, and found Te Toketoke lying in state, while the tangi (dirges and other ritual) were in full swing. Now, has Mr. Seddon's *Makutu*, or that of the Ngatipikeao tohunga, caused the death of Te Toketoke? Nobody knows, but I fear that, to the Maori mind, the Church will seem to have scored, rather than the State. See *Bay of Plenty Times*, iv. 3, March 1, for the circumstances.

* * *

The following stanzas are from the pen of an author who admits that he writes under the influence of the late Mr. Edgar Poe.

TO HELEN.

(After seeing her bowl with her usual success.)

Helen, thy bowling is to me
Like that wise Alfred Shaw's of yore,
Which gently broke the wickets three;
From Alfred few could smack a four:
Most difficult to score!

The music of the moaning sea,
The rattle of the flying bails,
The grey sad spires, the tawny sails—
What memories they bring to me,
Beholding thee!

AT THE SIGN OF THE SHIP.

Upon that old monastic pitch,
 How sportsmanlike I see thee stand !
 The leather in thy lily hand,
 Oh, Helen of the yorkers, which
 Are nobly planned !

* * *

When Miss Rhoda Broughton publishes a novel, the right sort of reader cries 'Ah ha!' and prepares to be entertained. Here is none of your dull, long-winded, affected preposterousness, but a story with humour, sentiment, delicate sense of nature, and appreciation of dogs. *The Game and the Candle* is good enough for me, and for the French, who give Miss Broughton her proper place among our novelists. Philosophically considered (for every critic of novels must be a philosopher), this romance is an arraignment of the passion of love. For love the world is well lost by the heroine, and then the love proves to be not worth the sacrifice. The hero for whom it is made has only been known to the lady for a fortnight at most, then Duty stepped in (as in my Lord Tennyson's poem); there was a parting (which somebody witnessed), and then not a word or letter for six years, after which Duty left the scene. Now the point is, that Miss Broughton makes you believe and know that her persons are in love; in which most novelists hopelessly fail. We have read of such affections; if we have been fortunate enough never to encounter them,

For all things are not good to touch,
 And life-long loves the worst of these,
 For us, *Félice* !

It is into one of these passions that the poor lady has fallen : for this she gives up wealth and a stately home, and leaves her name (perfectly spotless) at the mercy of the world, for love and for honour's sake. But what was the object or the cause of this master passion? A handsome, laughing face, and a jolly good nature, 'no more of him she knew.' So when *he* came back, after a week's delight (passed in Raasay, once the home of shipwrecked but enduring loyalty), the lady finds out that her deity has neither mind, nor manners, nor even faithfulness, as she understands it. 'That dream of love is over, as everything is over in life, as flowers and fury, and grief and pleasure are over.' I am not quoting Miss Broughton, but Colonel Henry Esmond. The candle is burned out, the game is ruined; and all you can say is that, if

the pair had married, their life would have been no happier than that of Lord and Lady Castlewood. The unfortunate hero (Mr. Miles) was faithful enough in his way; 'his heart was true to Poll,' as the song says. But he could not help kissing and consoling the distressed fair, wherever met, and that was not the heroine's way. 'The delicacy of your sex, madam, can never understand the coarseness of ours,' as Tom Jones said to Sophia, and the incomparable Sophia admitted the plea. Had I been Mr. Miles, when he was found out, I should have tried quoting *Tom Jones*, the lady being bookish. But he had not even that chance, poor fellow. Thus it is a pleasing, melancholy tale, from which the young might draw a variety of useful lessons, if that was their practice. The harpy sisters are excellently designed: so is the landscape, Highland or Lowland; so is the amusing Lady Barnes, who is vicariously *sensible*, and keeps such a crowd of dogs, brought up on democratic principles. Here is a portrait, not a caricature, and only Miss Broughton could have painted it. It is in Mr. Sargent's best manner. For the good young man I do not much care: he is a kind of scholarly wraith, and I think he deserved all he got, and did not get: he and his researches.

* * *

History may be 'gentlemanly,' as Thackeray said, but to write it is maddening. You try to be 'up to date;' you warmly espouse the latest theory of the *burh*, the latest you can find. And then its erudite author meets as erudite a critic, and while you are revising your proofs, he (in a most candid way) leaves not much of the theory standing, and where are you? Or a most important article comes out in a serial you never heard of, and explodes your theory, up to date as you fancied, of scutage, or Knight Fees, or whatever it may be. However, I do think I have caught Mr. Freeman's honest *English Chronicle* out in a new offence, and that is some trivial consolation. As for climbs up very tottering library ladders, to seek dusty books on shelves which you must explore with a dark lantern (going up like a literary Guy Fawkes, and coming down like a sweep), prose cannot do justice to these exercises. These ladders are really dangerous: however, it is an honourable death. Then the way the learned differ! An important event (which never occurred) is dated 924 in the *Winchester Chronicle*, which I used to think (in deference to Mr. Freeman) was brought down from a mountain, by an old English bishop. But Florence of Worcester, perhaps a

hundred and eighty years later, dates it 921. And then one prodigiously authoritative modern says that the *Winchester Chronicle* dates the event 921 (which it does *not*), and another paragon leaves it out altogether; and Dr. Gardiner (whom one expects to be one's salvation) puts the occurrence neither in 921, nor 924, but in 925, which makes it more intensely impossible than if it was 924, and on all this medley rests the national independence for which Wallace died; and for which I shall shed my last drop of ink. The thoughtless may smile. But, if one comes to grief in all this learned dust, the critics drop on one as if one were quite a new kind of literary criminal. Heaven was not pleased to make me accurate, I frankly admit, but at all events, I take my life in my hand, up these ladders, in the effort to be correct. But, in any case, one finds consolation in remarking that the greatest swells, like Macaulay, and Froude, and Dr. Lingard, may err, and have erred, like General Councils. Then a man makes a discovery, and, as a very learned researcher has plaintively remarked of late, nobody cares. No, it is not all beer and skittles, history.

* * *

Nor is the historical novel quite plain sailing. Mr. Crockett has lately introduced the odious Gilles de Rais into *The Black Douglas*. I don't know that the infamous Maréchal was ever in Scotland, but it is quite fair business to bring him in, as he was a contemporary. He fought by the side both of the true and of the false Pucelle, which is odd enough. But some of Mr. Crockett's critics seem to think he *invented* the Maréchal.

M. Bossard thinks he was the original of Blue Beard. Charles Perrault, about 1698, only dressed up the traditions of the monster of history. I do not think so; analogous tales of the Forbidden Chamber occur all over the world. There is a Vendean variant, but the differences are little more than verbal. M. Bossard knows the world-wide variants, of which Blue Beard is only one. But he is not at the folk-lore point of view. The truth probably is that, in Brittany, the world-wide story of the Forbidden Chamber has been attached, by popular fancy, to the legend of the great traditional scoundrel of the country, Gilles de Rais. This is the usual course in such affairs. Gilles is not the original of Blue Beard, but with Blue Beard he has been confounded, history mixed with *märchen* in the popular fancy and memory. So *märchen* are attached to Charlemagne, or, as in the case of the spider, to Robert Bruce. This attach-

ment of a *conte* to an actual personage prevents the Breton legend from being 'vague,' as it is vague elsewhere. The Breton can show the very castle of Blue Beard; the room where he hung up the cold remains of his wife (which the Maréchal never did), and so forth. But this lack of vagueness in Breton legend is not, as M. Bossard seems to think, a proof that the Maréchal is the original, any more than Robert Bruce's case proves that the story of the spider was first told about him. The 'precision' is got simply by attaching a world-wide fable to a notorious real personage. M. Bossard is not at the point of view.¹

* *

I was lately shown a MS. account of the female ghost seen, and sketched, by a Mr. Easton. The account was dictated by him, and names of persons and places were given; these, of course, I do not publish. Now the story was, in every essential, identical with Sir Walter's *Tapestried Chamber*, which those who have not read had better study, if they wish to be thrilled. The spectre of a very bad old lady walked, for a week, in Mr. Easton's room, in an ancient hall. He sketched it (the drawing has been photographed, and is hideous enough), and Mr. Easton recognised the ghost in a portrait hanging in the house. In Scott's version, the appearance sat down on the bed of the percipient, General —, and the General could not stand it. After recognising the original in a portrait next morning, he bolted. Mr. Easton was much more courageous. But the two stories are one story. Scott got his version from the celebrated Miss Anna Seward. It was published, probably from her version, in *Blackwood*, about 1818, before Scott handled it. The crime of the owner of the ghost, murder of a near relation, is the same in A and C, Scott and Mr. Easton. I have not B (*Blackwood*) at hand to consult.

* *

Now, what occurred? Did Mr. Easton simply borrow, and put forth as an experience of his own, A or B, or an oral version of C, Miss Seward's tale? Or did he stay in the same house, — Hall, and encounter the same very odious appearance? He said that the hall had changed owners, and that the entrance to the room was now bricked up. So says Scott also. Here is a problem for critics: did Mr. Easton plagiarise, or did history repeat itself? I feel no confidence!

* *

¹ *Gilles de Rais, dit Barbe Bleue*. Champion: Paris, 1888.

Of all ill-treated people, the beauties of the past suffer most from portrait painters. Lately I went to the portrait gallery. The far renowned brides of ancient song are frights, in their portraits. Even her bitter foes acknowledged the beauty of Mary Stuart. Look at the oil paintings, miniatures, and crayons! Elizabeth was (and in one portrait remains) undeniably handsome. But she is a hag in most portraits, though the artists must have tried to flatter Gloriana. King Charles's beauties, the Cleveland, the Querouaille, are dumpy, dull, blowsy women. The Queen of Beauty, Louise of Stolberg (Countess of Albany), is an unspeakably prim, commonplace personage, with no mind, and with a temper. Margaret Tudor is a heavy-faced, sensual, selfish huzzy, as, in fact, she was. Not till Reynolds, Romney, and Gainsborough, do you arrive at beauty. The painters must have been at fault. Mr. Frederick Boyle lately wrote on the decline of beauty. Judged by the portraits of old charmers, beauty is advancing by leaps and bounds. I left the gallery, and in the streets saw any number of young women with whom Mary, Elizabeth, Margaret, and the rest could not bear comparison. Obviously many of the old Court artists could not paint a beautiful woman, any more than Mr. Charles Keene could draw that agreeable object. It is the same with novelists; they cannot make you see that their heroines are fair, as a rule; I except Thackeray, Fielding, and Mr. Henry James in an early work. Probably there are other exceptions, but they do not occur to my memory. The old Italian artists, of course, could paint lovely women, Saints and Madonnas. But the portrait men were, too often, incapable of leaving on canvas the charm of the sirens of their days. Will our own sirens be more lucky? I have not seen the Academy, but I doubt it. A Greek potter, at a drachma a day, puts more grace into a twopenny terra cotta figurine than an R.A. can give us, for I don't know how much money.

* * *

Q. has left his Cornish point of view, in the *Pall Mall Magazine*, while this weather-beaten Ship sails under her old colours, under her veteran battered commander. She fires, with her rickety guns, a salute to the author of *The Splendid Spur*, and another to Mr. Street, with his brave new barque. But he shall not persuade me that 'Amaryllis and Corydon had no real life in the Sicily of Theocritus.' Theocritus was a realist, and in Sicily Corydon and Amaryllis are not extinct. Read Italian folk-

songs or Romaic folk-songs, composed by members of the people for the people, and you find Daphnis and Simætha as Theocritus drew them. On the other hand I abound in Mr. Street's sense about the Browning Love Letters. I have not read them. I do not think that another person's love letters are entertaining, except in breach of promise of marriage cases now and then. At this rate literary persons will be afraid to write love letters, or will keep copies of them, like the cautious Scot.

* *

Wherever a body turns, in Greek literature, he finds his unfortunate ancient author being mobbed and torn limb from limb by a crowd of German critics. It is the same with the Bible; Germans will tear a chapter of Hosea, say, into half a dozen pieces, all by different hands and of different ages. I have lately been reading the Homeric Hymns, around which the critics rage fearfully. But the excellent Baumeister, all German as he is, has pointed out that ten or twelve separate theories of the Hymn to Apollo, or of Hermes, are really rather too many. All are 'ingenious,' and not one of them is reconcilable with the other, or bottomed on anything but 'ingenuity.'

* *

The theories, Biblical or Homeric, usually start from discrepancies in the statement of the ancient author. He is said to contradict himself. No single author ever contradicts himself; therefore Homer, or Hosea, or the author of the Hymn, is *not* a single author. There are other objections, some based on language. An ancient writer uses a word, or phrase, supposed not to be of his period. On this line I could easily prove that Mr. Butler's recent translation of the Iliad is a work of several ages. But the great objection is that something in the ancient author's work does not fit the modern critic's theory. Therefore it must be an interpolation.

* *

Now try *Esmond* on these critical lines (first edition, 1852). On pp. 126-128, Colonel Francis Esmond (later Lord Castlewood) is said to have declined to join Fenwick's conspiracy. 'He had broke his sword when the king left the country, and would never again fight in that quarrel.' Yet (pp. 253-255) we find the Colonel entertaining the Duke of Berwick, when he was over here *incognito*, during Fenwick's plot—not, of course, the subsidiary assassination scheme. The narrator, now, 'has little doubt' that the Colonel was in the plot, and (contrary to pp. 253-255) it was

after the Prince of Orange burned the list of conspirators that the Colonel swore 'never to be engaged in any conspiracy against that brave and merciful man' of Glencoe celebrity. Obviously no one man wrote these contradictory pages! Again, Harry Esmond's last long vacation at Castlewood is actually doubled. There are two distinct versions of what occurred, the Jehovistic Version (p. 237 and what follows) with the Elohist Version (p. 279, with what follows). Esmond speaks Latin better than he writes it, and he also writes it better than he reads it. He is a Jacobite at College, and wears black on the day of the king's abdication. He is also a Republican at College, *this* statement occurring much later. These passages, and the doubled third vacation, cannot both have been written by one man. Esmond went to college at sixteen, being two years older than his fellow freshmen—a thing absurd in itself. After three years he was twenty-two, in defiance of arithmetic. When he is twenty-two, Beatrix is thirteen. He is, therefore, nine years older than Beatrix, but only eight years older than her younger brother, Frank, which is ridiculous. These are only a very few of the errors which a single writer, with proof-sheets before him, could not commit. Harry Esmond is again and again called Frank, and Frank is called Arthur! The style varies over two centuries, yet the final editor of this collection of divergent documents has the impudence to put on the title page

Servetur ad imum

Qualis ab incepto processerit, et sibi constet.

'Let the unity be preserved from beginning to end; let all be self-consistent.' In a few pages there are more discrepancies than in the whole Iliad, though the author of the Iliad had no proof-sheets. The book cannot be by one hand; yet we know for certain that it is by one hand. When will 'the Higher Criticism' face these facts, and abandon the pedantic imbecility of its methods?

ANDREW LANG.

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